



COMBAT

Arnhem 1944

British Airborne Soldier

VERSUS

Waffen-SS Soldier

David Greentree



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Illustrated by Peter Dennis

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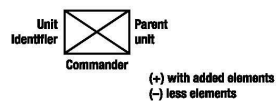
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Army Group	Army	Corps	Division	Brigade	Regiment	Battalion
						
Company/Battery	Platoon	Section	Squad	Infantry	Artillery	Cavalry
						
Airborne	Unit HQ	Air defence	Air Force	Air mobile	Air transportable	Amphibious
						
Anti-tank	Armour	Air aviation	Bridging	Engineer	Headquarters	Maintenance
						
Medical	Missile	Mountain	Navy	Nuclear, biological, chemical	Ordnance	Parachute
						
Reconnaissance	Signal	Supply	Transport movement	Fortress or static	Fortress machine gun	

Key to unit identification



Introduction

In September 1944 the remnants of the German forces that had escaped from Normandy were hastily withdrawing through France and Belgium. Lieutenant General George S. Patton's US Third Army was advancing on a broad front towards the borders of Germany and the fortifications of the Siegfried Line. Lieutenant-General Miles C. Dempsey's British Second Army had captured the port of Antwerp in Belgium, but the Germans retained Walcheren Island in the Scheldt Estuary and were able to prevent the Allies from using the port to bring in supplies. General Bernard L. Montgomery, GOC 21st Army Group (British Second and Canadian First armies), persuaded General Dwight D. Eisenhower, Supreme Commander Allied Expeditionary Force in the European theatre, that the use of airborne forces could assist British armoured divisions in breaking through the fragile defensive line that guarded the approaches to the Dutch ports; occupation of the Netherlands would also place the Allies in a position to outflank the Siegfried Line. Three airborne divisions would be used to capture numerous bridges over rivers, including the Rhine: the British 1st Airborne Division would seize Arnhem Bridge and the American 101st and 82d Airborne divisions would capture those closer to the front line, including Nijmegen Bridge.

The operation, which included an attack by ground forces to relieve the airborne soldiers, was given the name *Market Garden*. The Allied shortage of transport aircraft meant that the decision was made to land 1st Airborne Division in three separate lifts over three consecutive days (17–19 September). The cautiousness of Allied air force officers led them to suggest a landing area that was 11km from the centre of Arnhem; they were worried about German anti-aircraft positions at Deelen Airfield, north of Arnhem, which Allied aircraft would have to fly over if a closer area to the town was chosen. While the presence of marshy ground would have ruled out a large-scale glider landing close to Arnhem, the larger parachute element of the division could have landed nearer Arnhem Bridge, as 1st Polish Airborne Brigade proved when its forces landed at Driel on 21 September. By that date the German defences were formidable, but a surprise landing earlier would have encountered less resistance. The dangers presented to gliders by the marshy ground close to Arnhem made the employment of the airlanding

brigade a risky prospect, but the importance the Allied senior commanders placed upon having 1st Airborne Division land as a single entity made them accept the landing grounds the air force commanders suggested, despite the protestations of the parachute battalion commanders. If the parachute battalions had landed near Driel, the glider troops would not have been needed for the initial attack.



The officers commanding the Waffen-SS soldiers that fought the glider infantrymen had diverse backgrounds and reputations. Here, an *SS-Untersturmführer* is depicted in 1944. Convinced of their racial superiority, Waffen-SS personnel cultivated a high opinion of their own military prowess; but once they discovered the unforgiving nature of the battlefield environment, younger recruits found it difficult to adjust their mindset and sometimes took their frustration out on prisoners of war. The soldiers' ideological training made them aware that a strict military code of honour would be enforced, with harsh punishments for those who broke the rules. Recruits were exhorted to seek a hero's death on the battlefield. (ullstein bild/ullstein bild via Getty Images)



During Operation *Market Garden*, the Allied effort relied upon 1st Airlanding Brigade to maintain the integrity of the Oosterbeek perimeter. The leadership qualities of junior officers in charge of the platoons would prove invaluable, but they suffered heavy casualties. By 24 September, only one platoon commander in 7 KOSB remained unwounded. Because the airlanding battalions had limited training in street fighting and had to operate with too few heavy weapons compared with their opponents, junior officers often found they had to provide inspiration in a series of tough situations. (Haywood Magee/Picture Post/Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

During Operation *Market Garden* the glider troops of Britain's 1st Airlanding Brigade played a crucial role in securing and defending the perimeter that developed when 1st Airborne Division was on the defensive. Facing them were understrength Waffen-SS units that were hastily formed into ad hoc battle groups, some supported by armour. The troops on both sides would have their tactical flexibility and powers of endurance tested to the limit in the bitter battles that ensued. Traditionally, the focus of studies looking at the Arnhem landings is the battles of the two parachute brigades of 1st Airborne Division when they tried and mostly failed to fight their way into Arnhem. Less well known are operations of 1st Airlanding Brigade that

predominantly involved the securing of the Oosterbeek perimeter. Without these operations 1st Airborne Division would have ceased to exist altogether.

1st Airborne Division during Operation Market Garden, 17–26 September 1944



MAP KEY

- 1 1330hrs, 17 September:** 1st Airlanding Brigade lands on LZ S. The brigade's 2 S Staffs has only half a battalion and digs in; 7 KOSB starts to move to Ginkel Heath, and 1 Border heads to LZ Z.
- 2 18 September:** 2 S Staffs is ordered to assist 1st Parachute Brigade's advance into Arnhem. The battalion takes 7 hours to cover 8.5km to St Elisabeth's Hospital. In the afternoon the second half of the battalion lands and is also sent into town.

3 18 September: SS-Wach-Bataillon 3 attacks 7 KOSB on Ginkel Heath. Captain Gourlay with 19 PI, 7 KOSB, occupying a work camp, is overwhelmed by 5./SS-WachBtl 3. B Coy, 7 KOSB drives off two companies of Sicherungs-Regiment 26 using the road from Ede. At 1509hrs the second lift arrives and completes the defeat of SS-Wach-Bataillon 3.

4 18 September: B Coy, 1 Border ambushes the initial attack by 10. Schiffs-Stamm-Abteilung into Renkum. SS-Bataillon *Schulz* then provides heavy weapons and the German attack succeeds.

5 Early morning, 19 September: 2 S Staffs advances along the Utrechtseweg and reaches the municipal museum. The battalion encounters Kampfgruppe *Möller*; with the arrival of 3./StuGBrig 280 later in the morning, 2 S Staffs is pushed back and suffers severe casualties. The survivors capture the high ground on Den Brink in the afternoon, but then retreat to eastern Oosterbeek.

6 Afternoon, 19 September: 7 KOSB on LZ L initially defeats the attacks by Kampfgruppe *Krafft*. The third lift then arrives. With mounting pressure on the landing zone, 7 KOSB is ordered to cover the retreat south of the railway line. A Coy, the furthest north, is caught in the open and surrenders to Kampfgruppe *Krafft*.

7 Morning, 20 September: C Coy, 1 Border on the Koude Herberg junction is attacked by elements of SS-Bataillon *Eberwein* with support from tanks of Panzer-Abteilung 224. The British knock out two tanks and the German attack is repulsed.

8 Morning, 21 September: B Coy, 1 Border is attacked by Oberleutnant Artur Wossowski's 3./FSPzAuERgt *Hermann Göring* supported by a platoon from Panzer-Abteilung 224. Airborne soldiers armed with PIATs knock out three German tanks, but the British lose the Westerbouwing Heights. A counter-attack results in heavy British casualties and the capture of Major T.W.W. Armstrong, OC A Coy. The Germans are now in a position to dominate the Driel Ferry.

9 22 September: Elements of XXX Corps link up with the Poles who landed near Driel the previous day. The Allied advance to Arnhem Bridge is blocked because the structure had been retaken by the Germans the previous day.

10 Night, 25/26 September: After a failed attempt by Allied ground forces to reach the airborne forces from the south bank the previous night, the survivors of 1st Airborne Division make a withdrawal from the perimeter and cross the river in boats. Of 10,000 personnel that landed, fewer than 3,000 escape.

1st Airlanding Brigade was formed in November 1941 from four regular infantry battalions and lost two battalions in May 1943, although another – 7th Battalion, The King's Own Scottish Borderers (7 KOSB) – was incorporated in November 1943. The main units of the brigade in September 1944 were: 2nd Battalion, The South Staffordshire Regiment (2 S Staffs), 7 KOSB and 1st Battalion, The Border Regiment (1 Border). They were transported in Horsa gliders piloted by members of the Glider Pilot Regiment, whose personnel trained to fight as infantry.

Along with what remained of 1st and 3rd battalions, The Parachute Regiment (1 Para and 3 Para), 2 S Staffs participated during the early hours of 19 September in the attempt to enter Arnhem to relieve the soldiers of 1st Parachute Brigade who had reached the bridge. 2 S Staffs then assisted in the defence of the eastern sector of the Oosterbeek perimeter. 7 KOSB initially secured the landing grounds for the second and third lifts and then helped 4th Parachute Brigade, following that brigade's unsuccessful attack into north Arnhem on 19 September, to withdraw across the railway line into the Oosterbeek perimeter, and were responsible for holding the northern sector. 1 Border defended the long western sector.

The German armed forces in Western Europe were in a parlous state following the retreat from Normandy. On 7 September 1944 the vehicles of 9. SS-Panzer-Division *Hohenstaufen* clattered along the road from Nijmegen to Arnhem. The division's retreat from Normandy, starting on 22 August, was a confused action that changed by the hour. By early September the division had only 3,500 of the 15,898 men on establishment in June. SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans Möller, commanding SS-Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 9, the designated rearguard, described the withdrawal; he was dependent on hearsay and rumour because radios worked only rarely, and felt uncertain about where the enemy was and the safest route to take to avoid them (Kershaw 2004: 16). Allied air strikes were an ever-present danger in good weather and resistance fighters made frequent attempts to ambush the retreating Germans. The divisional headquarters unit found itself behind the

advance and had to follow the British forces as they swept into Belgium. On 15 September the Dutch resistance reported to the Allies the presence of the division in southern Holland. Allied aerial reconnaissance detected tracked vehicles in the area, but the commander of I Airborne Corps, Lieutenant-General Frederick A.M. Browning, decided to ignore these findings and did not inform his battalion commanders.

SS-Obersturmbannführer Walter Harzer's 9. SS-Panzer-Division *Hohenstaufen*, which would defend the western outskirts of Arnhem and then later attack the eastern side of 1st Airborne Division's perimeter at Oosterbeek, was no more than a brigade in strength, with few tanks. A diverse formation commanded by Generalleutnant Hans von Tettau attacked the landing zones to the west in order to interdict the arrival of the second and third lifts. Tettau deployed a diverse group of units over an 8km front, including (from north to south): SS-Sturmbannführer Eugen Eberwein's SS-Bataillon *Eberwein*, from SS-Unterführerschule *Arnheim* (SS Junior Leaders' School Arnhem); Oberstleutnant Adolf Zaiser's Fliegerhorst-Bataillon 1, a Luftwaffe unit drawn from airfield headquarters personnel; SS-Hauptsturmführer Günther Schulz's SS-Bataillon *Schulz*, another element of SS-Unterführerschule *Arnheim*; and 10. Schiffs-Stamm-Abteilung (10th Naval Manning Battalion). The first three German units to engage the landing forces on Ginkel Heath, however, were SS-Wach-Bataillon 3, a Dutch unit that guarded concentration camps; two companies of SS-Hauptsturmführer Walter Mattusch's SS-Panzergranadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 4, a training and replacement battalion; and SS-Sturmbannführer Josef 'Sepp' Krafft's SS-Panzergranadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16, another training and replacement battalion. The ability of the Germans to form ad hoc battle groups and incorporate new units as they arrived on the battlefield would be tested to the full.

The Opposing Sides

ORIGINS AND DOCTRINE

British

In November 1941, 1st Airlanding Brigade was formed from a brigade that returned from duty in India, supplemented by 1 Border. Originally, there were four battalions, but 1st Battalion, The Royal Ulster Rifles and 2nd Battalion, The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry were sent to 6th Airborne Division in 1943 and replaced by 7 KOSB. The units of the brigade were based at Woodhall Spa in Lincolnshire, but spent most of their time near airfields in the South Midlands where their gliders and tugs were based. The brigade commander at Oosterbeek was Brigadier Philip H.W. Hicks, a World War I veteran who commanded the brigade from April 1943.



The Horsa Mk II glider was made predominantly of wood, had a wingspan of 26.82m and a length of 20.73m, and could carry 28 soldiers plus the two pilots. There were bench-seats along both sides of the fuselage, two seats that were removable and three at the rear. Unlike the Horsa Mk I, which featured a large hinged door in the left side of the forward fuselage, the loading and unloading of cargo in the Horsa Mk II was conducted via a hinged nose section which swung open to the right. A small door in the left side of the forward fuselage and another on the right side aft of the wing were used by glider troops to enter and exit. Here, different sections of the Horsa Mk II are depicted prior to assembly. (Fg Off B. Bridges IWM via Getty Images)

COMBAT

Private, 7 KOSB

LZ L, 19 September
1944



This soldier based at Johannahoeve Farm is preparing to defend LZ L for the third lift; he landed in a Horsa glider on 17 September and deployed to defend the second lift on Ginkel Heath on 18 September when 7 KOSB, in company positions over a wide area, threw back SS-Wach-Bataillon 3 to enable the safe arrival of 4th Parachute Brigade. A platoon from D Coy was taken prisoner after being surrounded in a work camp; the rest of the company spent the day clearing woods on the eastern side of the heath. That night they redeployed to await the arrival of the third lift. On 19 September, before the gliders arrived, soldiers from Kampfgruppe *Krafft* advanced out of the woods and on to

the landing zone. D Coy and HQ Coy at the farm brought down a devastating fire on 9./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16.



Weapons, dress and equipment

The soldier is armed with a .303in Bren gun (1), the standard machine gun issued at section level. Firing from a 30-round magazine, the Bren had a low rate of fire of 500–520rd/min; effective range was 550m. He also carries a Fairbairn-Sykes knife (2), standard issue to airborne soldiers, in his trouser pocket.

His second-pattern Denison camouflage smock has a tail-piece flap (3) attached to the rear skirt of the smock; the flap could be drawn between the legs and fastened to the front skirt with metal press studs. He wears Pattern 1937 webbing and small pack (4), typically including a ground sheet, mess tin, two packs of 24-hour rations, a stove, fuel blocks and water-purification tablets. The two front pouches (5) each carried two Bren gun magazines. His water bottle (6) is fastened to his waist belt by a framework of straps. His gas mask respirator case (7) is attached to the belt, as is his spike bayonet (8). His entrenching-tool blade is in a canvas carrier (9) with the handle separate. He has a toggle rope (10) that could be strung together with others to form a rope ladder.



The Horsa Mk II could carry 3,348kg of cargo, the various possible loads including: one 6-pdr anti-tank gun and one jeep; two loaded jeeps; one jeep and one loaded trailer; one jeep and one 20mm gun; or one jeep and one 75mm howitzer with some of the crew. To enable rapid unloading, the fuselage was built with a rear section behind the wings that could be separated by pulling out quick-release bolts and detonating a cord that cut the construction bolts. Here, a jeep and trailer are shown and the separation point of the glider rear and centre sections is visible. Behind the wings of the Horsa in the foreground, the large cargo door in the forward section of a Horsa Mk I has been opened and lowered to reveal the fuselage interior after the cargo has been unloaded. In the far background, to the right, a Horsa's rear section lies on the ground after separation to facilitate the unloading of men and equipment. (Sgt D.M. Smith/IWM via Getty Images)

Although doctrine followed by the air transport forces of 38 Group stated that airborne forces should be separated from friendly ground forces for two to three days only, the landing zones for 1st Airborne Division would be 105km from the starting position of the relieving forces. The plan for the entire operation, which also included another two airborne divisions being flown in closer to the start line of the relieving forces, meant there would be a shortage of transport aircraft. The decision was made to give more aircraft to the airborne formations that landed closer to the ground forces. Common sense might have suggested those that needed to seize and hold objectives furthest from the relieving forces would have been given priority as they would need to hold their objectives for longer and would be more exposed to German counter-attacks. The plan that was implemented envisaged 1st Airborne Division taking three days to land. 2 S Staffs was further disadvantaged in that 38 of the battalion's gliders were given to Lieutenant-General Browning's I Airborne Corps headquarters, which did not fly into Oosterbeek, but landed further south; the battalion would have to land over two days. Furthermore, the Royal Air Force had decreed that only a single lift per day was achievable.

The towing aircraft bringing the gliders in had to keep formation and the pilots needed to choose the correct moment to release the glider from the tow in order that the glider pilot could glide down onto the designated landing zone. Many gliders would be released too early or too late, however, and would not be able to reach the area where the soldiers should have landed. The first problem the soldiers had after they had landed was to assemble, and identifiable terrain was picked for each company to gather around; glider landings could be confused affairs, though, and they were frequently scattered. This factor, when combined with reduced visibility on the ground, hampered rapid assembly; nevertheless, in comparison with paratroopers each glider platoon did land together and the airlanding battalions' ability to bring in heavier weapons enabled them to get moving more quickly.

The airlanding battalion was larger than the parachute battalion, with four instead of three companies, each with four platoons. Platoons were small – 26 men – in order that each Horsa glider could carry a platoon's worth of soldiers and their equipment. A hand cart carrying the ammunition reserve and a bicycle completed the platoon's equipment. The battalion also had a support company that included two 3in mortar platoons, two anti-tank platoons with 6-pdr guns and two Vickers medium machine-gun (MMG)

platoons. In total, 773 men were to be carried in 62 Horsa gliders and one Hamilcar glider that brought in two Bren Gun Carriers.

German

The Waffen-SS forces that would face 1st Airlanding Brigade were composed of various units with differing degrees of combat experience. 9. SS-Panzer-Division *Hohenstaufen* had served on both the Eastern and Western fronts. The division was formed in February 1943 with recruits from SS-Ersatz-Bataillon *Leibstandarte* and then, because volunteers were few, young conscripts from the RAD (Reichsarbeitsdienst – German Labour Service); they were led by a cadre of officers and training staff from the established SS Panzer divisions. Originally, conscripts accounted for 70 per cent of the division's strength, with most being from the 1925/26 cadre. Ethnic Germans from outside Germany were accepted. Sent to Hradischko in Czechoslovakia for training, recruits for SS-Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 9 were shown how to build bridges and fight as combat engineers; engineer versions of the armoured half-track were issued to one company within the battalion. The division had prepared to repel airborne landings since 1943 and its doctrine stated the need for a quick and aggressive response.



The various Waffen-SS units around the Oosterbeek perimeter were equipped with whatever weapons were available. Some continued to use the MG 34 machine gun, shown here with three Dutch SS volunteers in 1941. This MG 34 is mounted on a tripod and could be used in a sustained-fire mode. Weighing 19.2kg with tripod, the MG 34 used 250-round belts that could provide defensive fire out to 3,500m or – when used with a bipod – 50-round drums in an

offensive capacity. A rate of fire of 800–900rd/min was possible, but barrels needed to be changed frequently to reduce the chances of malfunction caused by overheating. The MG 34 would be superseded by the MG 42, but there were never enough of the latter to go around.
(Hanns Hubmann/ullstein bild via Getty Images)

COMBAT

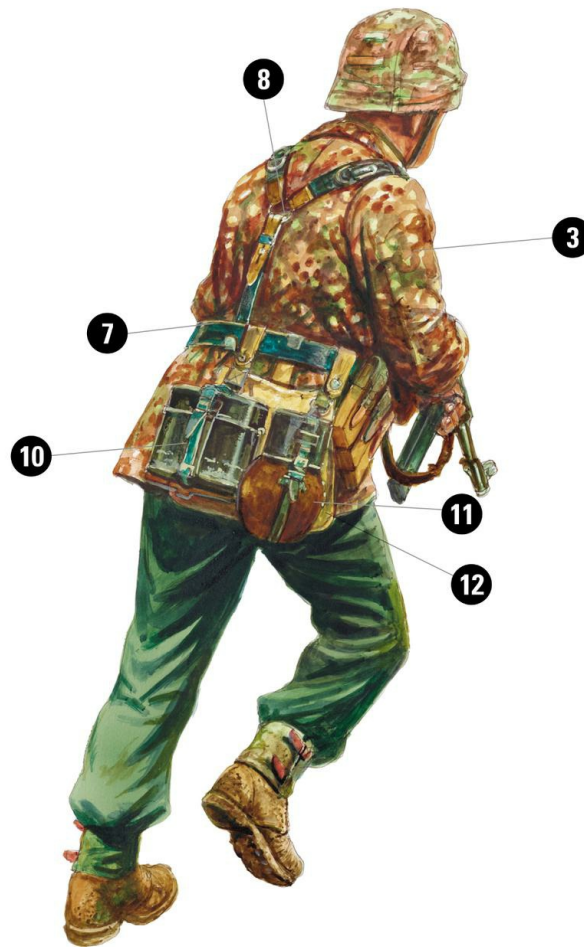
SS-Rottenführer,
9./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl
16

LZ L, 19 September
1944



This soldier was serving in the permanent training cadre helping to train young conscripts prior to their assignment to a front-line Waffen-SS *Panzergrenadier* division when the airborne landings took place close to his location. His company was initially in reserve, but was then involved in the German attack on the landing grounds on 17 September that was repulsed. Following a day of rest, his battalion was ordered to attack LZ L on 19 September with support from Kriegsmarine (Navy) units. His company commander, SS-Obersturmführer Günther Leiteritz, was recently sentenced to prison

and is awaiting the results of a retrieval, but the soldier is following him forward, albeit hesitantly, out of the woods towards the open ground of the landing zone.



Weapons, dress and equipment

He carries an MP 40 submachine gun (1) and there is an M24 grenade (2) tucked into his belt. He wears an M44 *Erbsenmuster* ('Pea-Dot') camouflage tunic (3). This was a single-breasted, lightweight, non-reversible jacket with a 'dot', or 'pea' pattern printed camouflage design comprising a series of light-green,

dark-green, black, dark-brown and light-tan rounded patterns superimposed on contrasting backgrounds. His helmet (4) has a second-pattern oakleaf camouflage cover with loops that enable foliage cover to be worn. He wears puttees (5) and short ankle-boots (6).

His personal equipment is attached to his waist belt (7) and Y-straps (8). He has twin MP 40 ammunition pouches (9) on his waist belt. His aluminium cooking pot (10) and water bottle (11) are attached to the D-rings on his bread bag (12). The black aluminium canteen cup was attached to the water bottle by a small belt and buckle.



Elements of the Heer's StuG-Brigade 280 fought at Arnhem in support of Waffen-SS forces. Formed in the summer of 1943, StuG-Brigade 280 with about 30 self-propelled guns was sent to the Ukraine later that year. In April 1944 the brigade supported 9. SS-Panzer-Division *Hohenstaufen* during its attack to relieve the German garrison of Tarnopol in southern Russia. The brigade was nearly destroyed and relocated to Denmark where it started to receive new self-propelled guns in September 1944. Here, a StuG III with infantry in close support advances down the Utrechtseweg. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-497-3530-34A Foto: Jacobsen)

In the immediate vicinity of Oosterbeek the Germans had SS-Panzergranadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16, a training unit that provided recruits to front-line formations. Its 435 soldiers were organized into three infantry companies and a heavy-weapons company with anti-tank (three 3.7cm PaK 35/36 guns), mortar (eight 8cm mortars) and anti-aircraft

(two 2cm guns) platoons. The headquarters platoon had four 28cm Wüfrahmen 40 mobile multiple rocket-launcher systems. Krafft's battalion was engaged on 17 September and then reinforced by units of Kriegsmarine personnel and repositioned to the north-west of Arnhem. It was ordered to attack the landing grounds on 19 September. Krafft's orders stated that he needed to be ready to repel airborne landings; his orders to his battalion on the day of the landings emphasized that it was to attack without delay in order to disrupt the British. He also worked out the different routes into town and understood the need for a blocking force that would compel the British to fight or force them to spend time moving around the block. Krafft ordered one company to attack while the other two prepared the defensive line.

SS-Unterführerschule *Arnhem*, commanded by SS-Standartenführer Michael Lippert, trained recruits from all over Europe. SS-Bataillon *Schulz* took to the battlefield with three companies; SS-Bataillon *Eberwein* had four. Companies usually had three infantry platoons, a machine-gun platoon and a mortar platoon. Most trainees already had a year's service. Before the landings the unit was at Schoonrewoerd, north-west of Zaltbommel, and had intercepted 3,000 stragglers, forming them into units that would provide recruits for replacement battalions. Lippert's command did not have integral transport and when he observed the landings he started to requisition local vehicles. He had no radio or telephone communication with Tettau. Tettau had a dysfunctional staff and his battalions were operating independently. SS-Oberstgruppenführer Hans Rauter, the Dutch SS and police chief, visited Lippert daily and provided vehicles, food and some ammunition to the battalion because it had no integral supply unit.

RECRUITMENT, MORALE AND LOGISTICS

British

In 1940 2 S Staffs, a regular infantry battalion, returned to Britain from overseas service. In October 1941 the men of the battalion were told it was to be a glider-infantry unit. As the level of fitness needed to be much greater than in an ordinary battalion, some soldiers were weeded out as unsuitable. All volunteers who wished to join had to do a short intensive course at Hardwick Hall near Chesterfield with the Airlanding Training Company

before being sent to the battalion where initially they joined R Coy and were then sent to either one of the infantry companies or the support company, which was designated S Coy. The training course was hard and the assault course was one of the longest. Those who failed would be returned to unit. Private Ron Etherington started his course in early November 1942 and tackled the final obstacle course in late December. He crossed walls by using poles and beams, crawled under barbed wire while being fired at with live ammunition, and shot at cardboard soldiers (Junier, Smulders & Korsloot 2004: 17–18). Once Etherington was with the battalion, training included the use of German weapons as it was understood that the battalion's ammunition would soon be depleted when operating behind enemy lines. From January 1943 Denison smocks were worn on exercises and operations.

In March 1943, 2 S Staffs was ordered to deploy to Algeria. Major William D.H. McCardie, a pre-war Territorial officer, was promoted lieutenant-colonel and took over command of the battalion, which deployed in May and disembarked in the port city of Oran in Algeria. In July 1943, 2 S Staffs landed by glider during Operation *Husky*, the invasion of Sicily, but many of the gliders ditched in the Mediterranean Sea. 2 S Staffs had retained a larger proportion of pre-war soldiers, but losses in the Sicilian landings were heavy, with 33 officers and 330 other ranks being casualties. In early February 1944, new recruits started to arrive, including ten officers. From June the battalion was on alert for operations in France, but did not deploy. This was frustrating, and fights broke out. McCardie warned the soldiers that if this behaviour continued, they would leave their billets and camp on the moors. The battalion would not fly in together during Operation *Market Garden*. Bn HQ, most of HQ Coy, B Coy and D Coy, plus a mortar platoon and an MMG platoon from S Coy would go in the initial lift, followed by the rest of the battalion in the second lift.



The soldiers from the original infantry battalions that were designated as glider-infantry battalions were kept, providing they passed a medical examination. Some men were volunteers, but in order to replace the losses suffered in the July 1943 Sicily landings, soldiers were selected to be sent to the glider-infantry battalions; such men had no choice in the matter. Many were sent to the battalion straight after basic training. Glider troops were given 1s per day extra pay (the infantry soldier was paid 2s per day). This photograph shows 17 PI, C Coy, 1 Border, in June 1944; Major William J. Neill sits in the middle of the front row. (Image courtesy of Cumbria's Museum of Military Life)



The Hotspur was the first troop-carrying glider produced in Britain; 997 were built. Each carried two pilots and six soldiers that entered by doors on each side. The Hotspurs were intended for training purposes only and were used to give air-experience flights to glider troops. (Fox Photos/Getty Images)

Also a regular infantry battalion, 1 Border had lost most of its pre-war soldiers in France in 1940 or during the subsequent medical tests to convert the battalion to airborne status. Following evacuation from Dunkirk, 232 soldiers from the Infantry Training Centre (ITC) at Carlisle joined the battalion in June 1940 to replace those who did not return from France; most had only a few weeks' training. In early 1941 the men of 1 Border were told

their unit would become a light battalion, and pack animals were put on establishment, but in October 1941 the unit was designated part of 1st Airlanding Brigade. Soldiers were given the option to transfer to another unit, but most stayed; records indicate that by December 1941, only 30 had decided to leave. The battalion needed a larger establishment, however, and posted notices asking for volunteers. In May 1943, the battalion deployed to Algeria; it would return to Britain in December that year. Casualties in the Sicily landings were severe and reinforcements from Lancashire and the north-east of England were incorporated. In August 1944, the battalion was on alert to carry out an operation near Paris, but this did not occur. Three other landings were also called off as the advance of the Allied ground forces in North West Europe made the operations obsolete.

Unlike the other two battalions, 7 KOSB was a Territorial Army unit, formed when 5 KOSB was split to form two battalions in April 1939. A Coy and B Coy drew their men from Wigtownshire, C Coy from Kirkcudbrightshire and D Coy from Dumfriesshire. The recruits from Wigtownshire that were already serving in 5 KOSB were re-assigned to 7 KOSB. Some militia incorporated into the ranks had to be re-assigned to industry, and professional soldiers from the north of England replaced them. In May 1940 the battalion, comprising 574 men, moved to Wiltshire and soon relocated to east of London as part of defensive forces that were deployed to resist an invasion. In August 1940, 27 soldiers joined from 1 KOSB and 93 from ITCs; many were Londoners who gained rapid promotion. Redeployment from East Anglia to Northumbria followed in late 1941, and further intakes from ITCs joined the battalion. The unit had no operational role and was used to provide drafts to other battalions. Personnel changes were numerous and were a deterrent to efficient training.

In October 1942 the battalion, part of 15th (Scottish) Infantry Division, was reorganized and served as part of the Orkney and Shetland Defence Force until November 1943 when 7 KOSB was ordered to join 1st Airlanding Brigade. As part of the weeding-out process, Company Sergeant Major J. Swanston marched the soldiers and stood behind them when they were being individually assessed during a medical examination; he nodded yes or no to the medical officer, depending on whether the soldier was deemed to be worthy to stay. Officers from the recently disbanded 9 KOSB joined the battalion. In November 1943 the unit moved to Woodhall Spa. Substantial training was needed as the unit had previously served in a defensive role.

Unlike the other battalions of 1st Airlanding Brigade, 7 KOSB found that little training time in gliders was available. The battalion had a reinforcement company along with four infantry companies, a headquarters company and a support company. From October 1943, the battalion commander was Lieutenant-Colonel R. Payton-Reid, a World War I veteran who had been commissioned in the regiment in 1915. Posted from 1 KOSB because of his age, Payton-Reid unexpectedly found himself to be the oldest field force commander in the Army. He expected high standards.

The airlanding battalions would be dependent upon aerial resupply while they waited for the relief force. Of the 108 tonnes that were parachuted to 1st Airborne Division, only 7 per cent is recorded as having arrived successfully. The landing zones were already in German hands and most of the supplies were gratefully received by the Germans. SS-Junker (officer cadet) R. Lindemann recalled that during the battle, he signalled to British transport aircraft with marker panels to prompt the dropping of supplies meant for the British (Kershaw 2004: 210).

German

In April 1941, SS-Infanterie-Ersatz-Bataillon *Germania* moved to the Netherlands. The battalion was responsible for the field-training of recruits that were going to SS-Division *Wiking*. By the end of 1942, however, it was no longer an infantry replacement unit; instead, it was a *Panzergrenadier* unit. The battalion's recruits underwent training in how to employ the SdKfz 251 armoured personnel carrier at SS-Panzergrenadier-Schule *Kiensschlag* at Prosetschnitz in Czechoslovakia; the school also provided a platoon leaders' course. In April 1943, SS-Sturmbannführer Krafft arrived to take command of the battalion. In June the unit, renamed SS-Panzergrenadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 12, was assigned to provide replacements for what would become 12. SS-Panzer-Division *Hitlerjugend*, though the replacement battalion for 1. SS-Panzergrenadier-Division *Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler* initially provided recruits for that division. This assignment would entail an expansion in the size of the battalion, and eight companies were formed to process hundreds of soldiers per week.

By the start of 1944, SS-Panzergrenadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 12 was deployed to defend against invasion and had to carry out its training function at the same time. Krafft had six training companies, plus a seventh, a *Stamm-Kompanie* (cadre company), and an eighth, designated a

Genesungs-Kompanie, which was manned by wounded soldiers who were recovering but not yet fit for duty. Krafft took wounded soldiers from 12. SS-Panzer-Division *Hitlerjugend* to be cadre personnel; in early August 1944, with the Allies about to break out of Normandy, 581 soldiers of Krafft's battalion were sent to 12. SS-Panzer-Division *Hitlerjugend* to replace losses. By that date, the Allies were about to break out of Normandy. By September, Krafft's battalion was renamed SS-Panzergrenadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16 and assigned to 16. SS-Panzergrenadier-Division *Reichsführer-SS* as that division's training and replacement battalion. SS-Panzergrenadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 4, stationed nearby, supplied soldiers to 4. SS-Polizei-Panzergrenadier-Division.

Although SS-Panzergrenadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16 was composed of 17–19-year-olds still in training and 40 per cent of the unit was deemed unfit for front-line service, Krafft asserted that his men were well led; he wrote how training in cover and camouflage and thorough instruction in weapon handling 'helped appreciably to strengthen morale' (War Diary SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16: 22). Krafft believed his men's morale was unshakeable and he was surprised at how well they performed against heavy odds and when nearly surrounded. Supplies to the battalion were interrupted, however, because lorry drivers lacked night training owing to petrol shortages. Krafft's men were also short of 8cm mortar shells and 2cm gun shells because the battalion lacked heavy transport. During the ensuing battle, captured jeeps proved to be useful as a means to evacuate the battalion's wounded; captured bandages and morphine were also used to good effect.

After 9. SS-Panzer-Division *Hohenstaufen* suffered severe losses in Normandy, replacements were brought in from the RAD, Kriegsmarine and Luftwaffe, but the division reported that while these recruits' weapons training and morale were satisfactory, the officers and NCOs were untrained and should not be employed in the attack. The officers did not know the men and the Waffen-SS advised that the units they formed should not be regarded as cohesive formations. Although Kriegsmarine artillerymen and Luftwaffe technical personnel had received only limited infantry training, Möller's SS-Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 9 would incorporate such recruits during the battle.

Established in August 1943, SS-Unterführerschule *Arnheim* shared facilities with Krafft's battalion. 1./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16 was transferred to the school, as was 2./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 4. The barracks they used were being renovated. The course was initially for Germans with front-line experience

and lasted four months; the course for non-Germans was only eight weeks long. All branches were instructed, including artillery, infantry and combat engineers. SS-Obersturmführer Heinrich Oelkers, the commander of 2./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 4, stated that there were initially no guidelines setting out the structure of the course or the content of the lessons (Gerritsen 2018). The syllabus included instruction in tactics, combat training, terrain appreciation, reconnaissance, house-to-house fighting and river crossings; at the end of the course there was an exercise conducted with Waffen-SS artillery and anti-tank troops. Students were promoted *SS-Unterscharführer* on graduation.

The school was the designated reserve for Kampfgruppenverband *Mitte*; tasked with defending the Dutch coast, it included SS-Panzergranadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 4 and SS-Panzergranadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 12. At times, Kampfgruppenverband *Mitte* was supported by SS-Panzerjäger-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Abteilung 2 (mot Z), SS-Unterführerschule *Arnheim* and V./SS-ArtAuERgt. The school was to have 250 soldiers available. In March 1944, a third company was established, and in May a fourth, fifth and sixth; the seventh and eighth were established in June.



In the spring of 1941 the Waffen-SS recruited Dutch and Flemish volunteers for SS-Standarte *Nordwest* and SS-Regiment *Westland*. During that summer, SS-Freiwilligen-Legion *Niederlande* was formed from these units to fight on the Eastern Front. In September 1941, one company from SS-Regiment *Westland* was used to form SS-Wach-Bataillon 3, tasked with guarding concentration camps in the Netherlands. Officially established in January 1942, the battalion was partially composed of wounded soldiers posted from SS-Freiwilligen-Legion *Niederlande*, but other recruits were taken from the undesirable elements of Dutch society, including petty criminals; a company of Ukrainians also served. Here, volunteers from SS-

Regiment *Nordwest* are shown during training in April 1941. (ullstein bild/ullstein bild via Getty Images)

In May 1944, SS-Unterscharführer Theodor van der Toren and SS-Hauptscharführer R. Rohloff of 3. SS-Panzer-Division *Totenkopf* were sent to the school as instructors. In June, Toren was appointed to lead the mortar platoon in 8. Kompanie, which included two infantry platoons, a machine-gun platoon and a mortar platoon. Most of the school's permanent staff were originally from SS-Regiment *Germania*. SS-Hauptsturmführer Günther Schulz, OC 6./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 4, was appointed to be the school's *Hauptmann im Stabe* (officer responsible for tactical training).

On 8 June, SS-Standartenführer Lippert was appointed temporary commander of the school. In August, 1.–4. Kompanien were organized into a battalion, to be led by Eberwein; 5.–8. Kompanien were organized into a second battalion, to be led by Oelkers, formerly the commander of 2. Kompanie. (By the time of Operation *Market Garden*, Oelkers led the first battalion and Eberwein led the second battalion.) SS-Untersturmführer Karl Semmelrock's 3./SS-PzJgAuEAbt 2, organized into four platoons, each with four guns, deployed in support of the school. Semmelrock's company was equipped with ten 7.5cm guns, four 5cm guns and two 3.7cm guns.

On 3 September 1944, Tettau was tasked with defending a line in the Netherlands stretching from Nijmegen to Moerdijk; his headquarters was in Grebbeberg. SS-Obergruppenführer Karl Demelhuber, the commander of all SS units in the Netherlands, had expected to be given command rather than Tettau, as many elements of Kampfgruppe *Tettau* were Waffen-SS units. Units assigned to Tettau included: two *Schiffs-Stamm-Abteilungen*; II./EuARgt *Hermann Göring*; two companies of SS-Panzergrenadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 4; SS-Bataillon *Oelkers*; three companies of SS-Panzergrenadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16; and four batteries of V./SS-ArtAuERgt. Lippert and the Luftwaffe's Oberst Fritz Fullriede were given areas of responsibility on the River Waal. Lippert deployed SS-Hauptsturmführer Walter Mattusch's SS-Panzergrenadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 4 and SS-Bataillon *Oelkers* with SS-Panzerjäger-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Kompanie 2 to Zaltbommel. Lippert's unit intercepted stragglers; one such soldier, Karl Schneider of 111. Infanterie-Division, was retreating across the river when he was made an SS-*Rottenführer* and incorporated into 6./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 4. Tettau

temporarily lost SS-Bataillon *Eberwein* when the unit was sent to Dordrecht to combat the resistance.



The Waffen-SS formations on the western side of the Oosterbeek perimeter would be supported by various Luftwaffe units. Oberleutnant Artur Wossowski's 3./FSPzAuERgt *Hermann Göring*, part of Oberst Fritz Fullriede's Fallschirm-Panzer-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Regiment *Hermann Göring*, was on coastal-defence duty when it was ordered to move to the landing zones near Arnhem. On 21 September, Wossowski's unit attacked the Westerbouwing Heights, defended by B Coy, 1 Border. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-590-2333-04 Foto: Appe [Arppe])

SS-Junker Lindemann, a 20-year-old instructor, was placed in charge of a mortar platoon in SS-Bataillon Eberwein. He had two requisitioned trucks that burned wood, but they broke down because no one knew how to operate them. Only the company and platoon leaders had maps. Fire engines were requisitioned at Leerdam, and horse-drawn carts were used to carry Lindemann's mortar ammunition; the soldiers used bicycles. To the south of Lippert's position was Korvettenkapitän Theodor Zaubzer's 10. Schiffs-Stamm-Abteilung, with five companies. Zaubzer asked Lippert to provide NCOs to help with leadership, as did Fliegerhorst-Bataillon 1. Lippert thought the units provided by the NCO school were the only worthwhile units in the sector. Lindemann, an Eastern Front veteran, felt he belonged to an elite; he respected Lippert and believed Tettau hated the Waffen-SS (Kershaw 2004: 48).

Lippert dismissed SS-Wach-Bataillon 3 as unsatisfactory because its soldiers had no combat experience; they were deemed to be medically unfit for front-line service and lacked motivation and training. By June 1944, the

battalion's best soldiers had been transferred to fill vacancies in other guard units. That month, following the Allied invasion of France, no further transfers were permitted, but the battalion was already reduced by 50 per cent to 600 soldiers. SS-Sturmabführer Paul Helle, CO SS-Wach-Bataillon 3, had five infantry companies and a heavy-weapons platoon available. Helle had no combat experience and was reliant on his adjutant, SS-Untersturmführer A. Neumann, a wounded Eastern Front veteran. The soldiers had poor disciplinary records and there was a high incidence of crime within the battalion, including theft, looting, fraud, blackmail, illegal house searches and desertion. There was no real knowledge of combat tactics and many of the soldiers would desert during battle. SS-Wach Bataillon 3 had a poor reputation within the Waffen-SS and German SS recruits would warn prisoners of war when members of the battalion were present. Personnel of SS-Wach-Bataillon 3 could frequently be bribed; some were found out and sent to prison. During the impending battle, Lippert would relieve Helle when the latter officer refused to order his soldiers to cover open ground; SS-Wach-Bataillon 3 was then led by Neumann. While 1./SS-WachBtl 3 was commanded by a Dutch officer, SS-Obersturmführer Johannes Bronkhorst, all the other company commanders were German.

TRAINING, TACTICS AND WEAPONS

British

Major Robert L. Hargroves of 2 S Staffs described how British training focused upon the development of mental and physical fitness, weapon handling and initiative (Junier, Smulders & Korsloot 2004: 12). The soldiers had to be capable of launching both offensive and defensive operations, by day and night, for 2–3 days' duration. In the summer of 1942, R Coy, Hargrove's training and reinforcement company, was established, following a move to Bulford in Wiltshire. Hargrove organized a week-long course of intensive training with a team of instructors that took each platoon on a series of exercises by day and night using live ammunition. The resultant reports would lead to promotion or demotion for those involved.

In March 1944, 2 S Staffs held Exercise *Goshawk*, with 1 Border playing the enemy; 2 S Staffs defended and then went on the attack the next day. After the exercise, jeeps were delivered and the soldiers practised loading and unloading Horsa gliders. On 4 April, Exercise *Dreme* saw most of the

battalion's personnel undertaking a 2½-hour glider flight prior to a mass landing on Salisbury Plain. Exercise *Mush*, conducted over five days starting on 21 April, involved a larger-scale landing with heavy weapons. In May, the focus was on ground exercises that promoted co-ordination between companies.

Lieutenant Charles Doig was introduced to gliders at Brize Norton in Oxfordshire in January 1944. The battalion had been assigned trainee glider pilots. Doig's pilot allowed his glider to take off before the tug aircraft was in the air; the pilot then overcompensated and the glider crashed through a wire fence into a canteen. A plywood partition nearly hit Doig. Like the other battalions, 7 KOSB had a reinforcement company that conducted training as well as a headquarters company, four infantry companies and a support company.

1 Border also established a training company, to emphasize physical fitness and military skills beyond the level required of an ordinary infantry battalion. All volunteers were initially sent to this company to bring them up to the standard attained by soldiers in the other companies. The six-week-long course prioritized instruction in section training, use of ground, weapons training and movement at night. Those who failed the course were returned to unit. Regardless of rank, every soldier reverted to private. Even recruits who had passed the course could be returned to unit for misconduct. In April 1942, glider-flying experience commenced, using the Hotspur, a small training glider that did not impress those who flew in it.



The PIAT, here being used by the prone soldier, was issued to 1st Airlanding Brigade to be used predominantly against tanks. Effective range was 110m; the HEAT (High Explosive Anti-Tank) round issued for the PIAT could penetrate 75–100mm of armour at a 90-degree angle. The PIAT was also used against snipers hiding in buildings. (Sgt D.M. Smith/IWM via Getty Images)



Glider pilots were selected from Army personnel. Training took 30 weeks and comprised 12 weeks on Tiger Moth biplanes, 12 weeks on the Hotspur glider and six weeks on the Horsa glider (co-pilots would take a three-week course on the Horsa). A two-week battle course then instilled battle drill and the employment of weapons, including those used by the enemy. All personnel were sergeants or staff sergeants. After landing, pilots would fight on as infantry.

There were two glider pilot wings, each of three or four squadrons (the equivalent of companies) that each had four flights of four officers and 48 soldiers who would form a reserve and guard rear areas in battle. There were 1,200 glider pilots at Oosterbeek; 229 would be killed in combat. Here, glider pilots fighting in a ground capacity are shown in Oosterbeek. (Sgt D.M. Smith/IWM via Getty Images)

Initially, S Coy, 1 Border had six platoons: one with eight mortars; two with four 6-pdr anti-tank guns each; two with four Vickers MMGs each; and one with six 20mm cannon. In 1 Border the 6-pdrs were named after regimental battle honours. The PIAT (Projector, Infantry, Anti-Tank) was introduced in March 1943. The support company was subsequently reorganized to include: two mortar platoons (one carried in jeeps, the other in hand carts), each with six mortars; two platoons, each with four 6-pdr anti-tank guns; and two MMG platoons, each with four Vickers MMGs. In June 1943, 1 Border was given two Bren Gun Carriers for use by the mortar platoons; these would be transported in Hamilcar gliders. The Hamilcar, with

a 33.5m wingspan, was the largest glider in British service, capable of transporting a variety of loads: a 25-pdr howitzer or 17-pdr anti-tank gun with towing vehicle; two Bren Gun Carriers; three jeeps; an engineering vehicle or equipment; or 40 soldiers. 1st Airborne Division also fielded the 75mm pack howitzer, with a range of 8,925m; it equipped three batteries, each with two four-gun troops. Each battery would support a brigade from the division. Each 75mm gun team had a towing jeep and a second jeep with ammunition trailer.

The infantry section, the basic tactical unit, had a fire group based around a Bren gun and a group of riflemen to close with the enemy. The issue rifle was the No. 4 Mk 1 Lee-Enfield, a bolt-action weapon with a ten-round magazine and a 500m effective range, while section commanders carried the Sten, a submachine gun with a 32-round magazine and an effective range of 100m. The Sten Mk V was introduced in the spring of 1944. Every platoon had two snipers equipped with telescopic sights on their Lee-Enfield rifles. The section second-in-command commanded the Bren gun team, comprising a gunner and loader. Each platoon headquarters had a 2in mortar that could fire high-explosive, smoke and illuminating rounds to a range of 460m, and one PIAT. The 3in Mk II mortar fielded by the battalion's support company could throw a 4.5kg shell 2,600m.



The Mk II 6-pdr anti-tank gun on a Mk III airborne carriage was used by the glider-infantry battalions, with eight per battalion. There were also two anti-tank batteries, each battery having three troops of four 6-pdr guns each and two troops of four 17-pdr anti-tank guns each, which were assigned to the two parachute brigades. Each 6-pdr team was delivered in two gliders, the first carrying the 6-pdr and its towing jeep, which had shells on the bonnet and front bumper, and the second carrying a jeep and trailer carrying equipment and further ammunition. The 6-pdr gun fired APDS (Armour Piercing Discarding Sabot) rounds that were capable of penetrating 160mm of armour at a range of 500m. The APDS rounds used during the Operation *Market Garden* fighting had the shot encased in plastic, which fell off when the round was fired; the plastic was often mistaken for the fall of shot by the gun layer, and corrections were made with inaccurate results. The Mk III airborne carriage had narrow wheel

spacing, folding trails and a smaller gun shield to enable the gun to fit into the Horsa glider. (© IWM H 37697)



Usually, two 8cm Granatwerfer 34 mortars were issued to infantry companies from the parent battalion's *schwere* (heavy) company. Effective range was 400–1,200m. Weighing 57kg, the weapon could be dismantled into three parts – barrel, baseplate and bipod – when not in use. The soldiers of 1st Airlanding Brigade would endure heavy mortar bombardments on a daily basis, something the British referred to as 'morning hate'. Here, Flemish SS volunteers operate a Granatwerfer 34 in 1944. (ullstein bild/ullstein bild via Getty Images)



Möller's *Pioniere* were used to close combat. Recalling the Arnhem battles, Möller described a jungle of gardens with terraces and pavilions and plenty of hedgerows and bushes for concealment (Kershaw 2004: 92). On 17 September, SS-Untersturmführer Erhard Voss, OC

2./SS-PzPiBtl 9, accompanied by SS-Oberscharführer Potschke, crept into a park that bordered a mansion on the Utrechtseweg, hugging the hedgerows and keeping off the gravel surface to remain quiet. An *SS-Rottenführer* hung an explosive device on the door knocker of the mansion that blasted it open; Voss and five others went in, but the defenders from 1st Parachute Brigade opened fire the same time as the Germans did, and Voss was mortally wounded. SS-Obersturmführer K. Steiner, OC 1./SS-PzPiBtl 9, covered the withdrawal and two armoured personnel carriers from SS-Obersturmführer G. Engel's 3./SS-PzPiBtl 9 pummelled the house with gunfire. The German vehicles moved closer when they found out that the British were capable of small-arms fire only. Möller admitted that he had not thought the British defences were that strong (Kershaw 2004: 92). The British survivors surrendered during the evening of 17 September. The battle against 2 S Staffs would follow a similar course. Here, Möller's men, this time supported by self-propelled guns, close in on the municipal museum on 19 September. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-497-3531-08 Foto: Jacobsen)

German

German military training taught the use of combined-arms battle groups (*Kampfgruppen*) to break through an enemy line; these were frequently commanded by relatively junior officers, and experience rather than seniority was what mattered most in a leader's attributes. In 1943, the personnel of 9. SS-Panzer-Division *Hohenstaufen* received training in how to repel airborne landings while waiting for the division's complement of tanks to arrive. In September 1943 an exercise conducted to assess the division's response to an airborne landing was pronounced a success. Unit commanders were taught to attack quickly with whatever was available to them and to hit the enemy hard. The leeway that was already given to junior officers and NCOs to make decisions and act upon them promoted such an approach. Training focused on battlefield skills including marksmanship, camouflage and map reading. There was no parade-ground drill; instead, physical fitness, character training and weapons skills were prioritized.

After training was completed in southern France the division, along with 10. SS-Panzer-Division *Fruntsberg*, was sent to southern Russia in the spring of 1944 to relieve a surrounded Panzer army. The operation was a success. In early June both divisions moved to northern France to help repel the Allied invasion, but instead of a planned counter-attack the divisions defended the sector west of Caen. By the end of July the *Panzergrenadier* regiments each disbanded a battalion and individual companies were down to 50 soldiers. 9. SS-Panzer-Division *Hohenstaufen* formed a reserve and counter-attacked exploitation attacks conducted by British armoured units. With the break-out of US forces in the west, by the middle of August the division was helping to keep the northern side of the Falaise Pocket open to

allow for the withdrawal of other German units. By this time, only 6,000–7,000 soldiers remained on strength from the 15,900 or so that had started the campaign. Following a bitter rearguard action in northern France and Belgium, Generalfeldmarschall Walter Model, the commander of Heeresgruppe B, ordered 9. SS-Panzer-Division *Hohenstaufen* to the northern Netherlands. The division would subsequently be ordered to conduct an immediate attack upon the British landing force in order to prevent airborne soldiers from reaching Arnhem.

SS-Rottenführer Wolfgang Dombrowski of 2./SS-PzPiBtl 9 had served with his unit since its inception; he was one of only seven who had completed the year-long instruction course who remained with the unit in September 1944. Having escaped from Normandy, Dombrowski was preparing to go to Siegen in western Germany in order to be re-equipped. The majority of 9. SS-Panzer-Division *Hohenstaufen*'s remaining vehicles were handed over to 10. SS-Panzer-Division *Frunderberg*, which would stay in the Netherlands. Only five of 140 vehicles from Möller's SS-Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 9 had escaped from Normandy. He was asked to hand them over, but two were described as out of order and retained. Once the retreat from Normandy was over, Möller's unit had time to refit and every section received an MG 42 machine gun in place of the older MG 34. Explosives were also distributed to the platoons.

On 17 September, Dombrowski was in Brummen in the eastern Netherlands, a 30-minute drive from Oosterbeek; at this point he believed the war was lost, but was prepared to fight on (Kershaw 2004: 53). Lacking most of its equipment, 9. SS-Panzer-Division *Hohenstaufen* had formed 19 *Alarmeinheiten* (quick-reaction alarm companies) in case something should occur; these companies comprised 2,500 personnel in total and were, on average, 10–15km from the landing areas. They were positioned in villages close to good roads rather than in the middle of towns that could be congested and vulnerable to attack by the Dutch resistance.

Having trained recruits in the area since 1941, Krafft's SS-Panzer grenadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16 was Tettau's reserve. Krafft met Tettau in early September and persuaded him that his battalion should replace Oberst Fritz Fullriede's regiment in Oosterbeek. About to receive 1,000 additional soldiers, Krafft stated that the training grounds nearby would enable him to process these men and carry out defensive duties at the same time. Krafft moved there with two training companies and his

heavy-weapons platoons (12 officers and 294 men); his four other training companies were still guarding against invasion. He formed a 9. Kompanie from the *Stamm-Kompanie* and *Genesungs-Kompanie* that were stationed near Oosterbeek. His orders were to defend the area from airborne landing. When Model moved to the Tafelberg Hotel in Oosterbeek, Krafft moved 2./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16 to Hotel Wolfheze.

The Kriegsmarine battalions attached to SS-Panzergrenadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16 from a Kriegsmarine reception centre ‘were not entirely suitable as infantry, particularly in the attack, but they did not lack keenness or enthusiasm. Particularly was this the case for one of the battalions’ (War Diary SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16: 22); too few officers and NCOs had received infantry training, however, and Krafft suggested that they experienced difficulties leading their men in action. He did not think that they would be very successful in battle. On 23 September, 500 other Kriegsmarine recruits arrived without officers and mostly without NCOs; they were incorporated more fully into SS-Panzergrenadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16, with company, platoon and section commanders appointed from Krafft’s unit; ‘this led to some difficulties, but under the energetic guidance of these commanders, the marines soon learned enough of cover, camouflage and entrenching to make them useful in the defence’ (War Diary SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16: 22). The Kriegsmarine personnel were grateful for the concern shown because they were sent out without greatcoats, blankets and other basic equipment. Some men among them were indispensable because they were trained artillery specialists who were put to good use with captured weapons; others were trained observers.



Kampfgruppe *Gropp* (led by SS-Obersturmführer Heinz Gropp) with elements of SS-Flak-Abteilung 9 provided support to Möller’s SS-Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 9 during the battle along

the Utrechtseweg on 19 September. Gropp had the use of an SdKfz 10/4 half-track that had a 2cm FlaK 38 anti-aircraft gun mounted on a platform atop the chassis. Most of the four FlaK 38 guns Gropp had acquired from Deelen Airfield were positioned north of the railway line running through Arnhem, but one was positioned on the Utrechtseweg. Here, such a gun is visible in the town. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-497-3530-02A Foto: Jacobsen)

The basic weapon used by the German forces during the Oosterbeek battles was the Kar 98k, a bolt-action rifle with an internal magazine capable of holding ten rounds; effective range was 500m, or 1,000m with telescopic sights. The MP 40 submachine gun equipped junior leaders and officers; it had a 32-round magazine and offered an effective range of 100–200m and a rate of fire of 550rd/min. The squad MG 34 or MG 42 machine guns were bipod-mounted and could either have rounds fed on a 250-round belt or by two 50-round drums. Effective range was up to 3,500m in a static defensive capacity. On average, these machine guns fired 100rd/min, though the notional cyclic rate of fire was 1,200rd/min. Most infantry companies (each with three platoons) fielded two tripod-mounted machine guns to provide supporting fire, along with two 8cm Granatwerfer 34 mortars that could throw a 3.5kg shell 2,400m at a rate of fire of 15rd/min. The hand-held *Panzerschreck* anti-tank rocket launcher, which fired HEAT (High Explosive Anti-Tank) rounds capable of destroying Allied tanks out to 150m, was available to some units. The *Pioniere* (combat engineers) were equipped with explosive charges that could be used on buildings. The widely issued *Panzerfaust*, a one-shot anti-tank weapon, also proved effective in urban combat; firing a HEAT warhead to 50m, the weapon could blow holes in buildings.

COMMAND AND CONTROL

British

The battalions that landed were unaware of the presence of German armour despite senior officers being briefed about the presence of the SS Panzer divisions. If they *had* been told, perhaps they could have taken more PIATs with them to help counter the armour threat. Tactical air support would not be available to the British during the battle because requests had to be relayed via headquarters in Britain. Suitable flying weather was rare over the Allied airfields in Belgium and when it was available, air transport sorties were prioritized. The RAF was not employed to isolate the battlefield by

preventing the uninterrupted flow of enemy reinforcements. During the battle, the Germans even enjoyed local air superiority that would see German fighter aircraft strafe the airlanding battalions in the days after they landed.

The communication equipment used by 1st Airborne Division was ineffective. The No. 68 radio set was capable of being carried by a soldier; with an effective range of 4.8km, it was designed for the battalions to use immediately upon landing, but the battalions of 1st Parachute Brigade landed a long way from their objective and would soon be further than the No. 68 set's range from their headquarters. Carried in a jeep and offering a range of 9.6km, the No. 22 radio set, used for communication between division and brigades and the artillery, was better – there were few issues with this radio. Also in a jeep, the No. 19 radio set, needing more batteries and heavier charging equipment, had a range of 19.3km. The urban, wooded environment around Arnhem affected radio performance, however, in particular that of the No. 68 sets. The potential issues with the No. 68 sets were raised, but to replace them with the longer-range radios would have required more jeeps, which in turn would have disrupted the loading arrangements of the gliders.

The issue with the radios not working effectively in an urban environment was not a complete surprise. Captain Wilfred J. Marquand of 1st Parachute Brigade's signals section stated that during an exercise in Grimsby the participating units had experienced poor communications (Greenacre 2004: 290). Marquand took extra telephone cable on Operation *Market Garden*, but enemy action precluded its effective use. Motorcyclists could be used to deliver messages, but the confused nature of the fighting and the unfamiliarity of the terrain made getting through unlikely. The Dutch telephone system would be used by some enterprising signals officers, but this was discouraged as senior commanders thought the network could have been compromised by informants.



The radios fielded by 1st Airlanding Brigade were compromised because they only used the high-frequency (HF) band (1.5–30MHz). The Army Operational Research Group had recommended in late 1943 that VHF (30–50MHz) should be used regardless of topography, but the British Army's communication doctrine was based on the belief that some terrain could screen these higher frequencies, and so the proposals were not developed. The use of such a narrow range of frequencies entailed problems of tuning to reduce the probability of interference. Here, a signaller is shown with a No. 68 radio set used by the airlanding battalions. (Keystone-France/Gamma Rapho via Getty Images)



Weighing 2.25kg and operating between 3.5MHz and 6MHz, the American SCR-536 hand-held 'walkie talkie' radio was issued to British platoon commanders. The effective range was 400m. In 1 Border there were five soldiers that formed two signals teams equipped with the No. 68 set, one team in a jeep, the other in a trailer. The two signals teams flew in separate gliders. 7 KOSB's intelligence section, commanded by Lieutenant Alexander Mackenzie, was responsible for the maps of Arnhem and the surrounding area. Mackenzie's men were tasked with distributing the maps properly, and updated the positions of the different units on the map that the battalion commander used. (Image courtesy of Cumbria's Museum of Military Life)

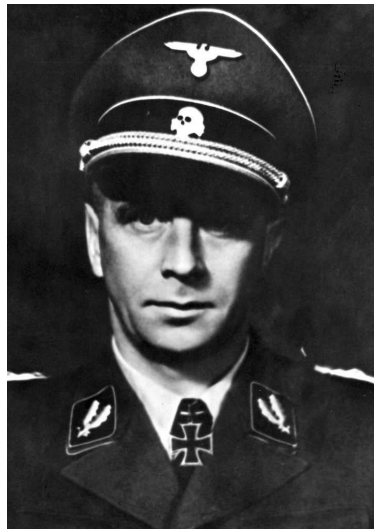
Obtaining information about the German positions was hampered by the decision to use Major Frederick H. Gough's 1st Airborne Reconnaissance Squadron to drive into Arnhem. Using the jeeps to scout and report the presence of enemy movements should have helped to mitigate the disastrous performance of the radios; however, they were on a different radio net and reported to their own liaison officer within divisional headquarters. On the day of the landing Gough was told that Major-General Robert E. Urquhart, GOC 1st Airborne Division, wanted to know whether 1st Airborne Reconnaissance Squadron had arrived with all his jeeps (Urquhart had falsely heard that none had arrived), and departed his unit to find him. Gough's departure meant that the squadron had no commander for the rest of the day, and its personnel did not know what to do when ambushed by SS-Panzer Grenadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16 on the squadron's original route; thus their ability to scout routes ahead was rendered ineffective.

Senior British commanders were not in a position to hurry things along. Urquhart abandoned his divisional headquarters to visit 1st Parachute Brigade when the division-brigade link did not work. The primary frequency was receiving interference and the secondary frequency was going to be used, but brigade headquarters was incorrectly using a No. 68 set for the link to division; the set was already out of range and brigade headquarters could not be informed. Urquhart could not be reached on the radio in his jeep; he reached Brigadier G.W. Lathbury, OC 1st Parachute Brigade, but the fluid nature of the fight meant that the two men met behind enemy lines and were unable to return at a vital moment during the British advance into Arnhem. Brigadier Hicks, CO 1st Airlanding Brigade, assumed divisional command and Colonel Hilary N. Barlow, 2IC 1st Airlanding Brigade, was put in charge of that brigade; Barlow was killed on the morning of 19 September while travelling to co-ordinate the attack into Arnhem.

German

SS-Sturmbannführer Krafft was probably sent to his battalion because his honour was besmirched. In February 1943, while serving in Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler's office, he officially requested the German Cross in Gold. Krafft had heard rumours that he was going to be recommended for this award, but he did not want to go through the normal nomination process. The chief-of-staff of Himmler's office gave him support, but the head of

personnel did not. SS-Oberführer Jürgen Wagner, the commander of SS-Regiment *Deutschland*, the unit Krafft had served with on the Eastern Front in 1941, was asked to comment; he stated that he was surprised that the nomination had not gone through him and wrote that the battle used to justify the award had already been used to justify the earlier issue of the Iron Cross to Krafft (Revell, Cherry & Gerritsen 2013: 126). This was not allowed. Krafft's integrity was called into question and in April 1943, the month that Wagner wrote this letter, Krafft was posted to the replacement battalion.



SS-Obergruppenführer Wilhelm Bittrich won the Knight's Cross as an *Oberführer* in December 1941. On 1 August 1944 he became GOC II. SS-Panzerkorps. When news of the Allied landings reached Bittrich, he ordered SS-Obersturmbannführer Walter Harzer's 9. SS-Panzer-Division *Hohenstaufen* to advance on Oosterbeek while his other division, 10. SS-Panzer-Division *Fruindsberg*, was sent to Nijmegen. In the Waffen-SS especially, many – such as Bittrich, the son of a travelling salesman – came from lower-middle-class backgrounds rather than the nobility, which traditionally dominated leadership of the Heer (the German Army). While this might have encouraged a closer familiarity with their soldiers, some Waffen-SS officers would not be averse to gaining their objective whatever the cost. SS-Untersturmführer Zander, a platoon commander in SS-Panzergranadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16, joined the Waffen-SS in 1939, completed the officer-training course in 1943 and was then sent to the battalion. He was given a nine-month prison sentence following a trial over a disciplinary issue and was also reduced in rank to NCO; however, the sentence only arrived in October 1944. (Bundesarchiv Bild 183-R63406 Foto: Bauer, Friedrich Franz)

Krafft's company commanders were a mixed bunch. SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans Heinrich Köhnken, OC 2./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16, had joined the Waffen-SS in 1937, attended officer training in 1939, served with headquarters units and then deployed to Russia with a security regiment in 1941. SS-Obersturmführer Günther Leiteritz, OC 9./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16,

had been thrown out of 12. SS-Panzer-Division *Hitlerjugend* because he tried to bribe an NCO. Leiteritz was taking company money to buy alcohol and tobacco at cost in order to sell it on to a local shop at a higher price. The NCO found out and Leiteritz asked him not to report the incident. At a trial Leiteritz was sentenced to 14 months' imprisonment, but SS-Oberstgruppenführer Josef 'Sepp' Dietrich requested a second trial, held in early September 1944, which resulted in an increased sentence of five years. Leiteritz heard about this and knew that he was about to be taken out of SS-Panzergranadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16 to serve his sentence – but the Allied landings delayed his removal. SS-Obersturmführer Ernst Kauer, OC 4./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16, had joined the Waffen-SS in 1938 and served as an NCO and then an officer candidate in SS-Regiment *Germania*. He completed officer training in 1941, served in that capacity in 1942 and was wounded in December of that year. When he recovered he was assigned to Krafft's battalion.

SS-Standartenführer Lippert had held varied positions in the concentration-camp system, including camp commander, since 1933. He commanded a regiment within 1. SS-Infanterie-Brigade (mot.), formed from concentration-camp guards, and then SS-Freiwilligen-Legion *Flandern* in 1941. In 1942, Lippert was badly wounded while serving with the latter unit on the Eastern Front. Having recovered from his injuries, he returned to command SS-Regiment 8 in 1942 and was wounded again. After another period of convalescence, he was sent to the newly forming 10. SS-Panzer-Division *Frundsberg* for a short time before being appointed commander of SS-Unterführerschule *Arnheim* in 1943.

Formerly battalion adjutant in Polizei-Schützen-Regiment 3 of 4. SS-Polizei-Panzergranadier-Division in the Soviet Union, Oelkers moved to SS-Panzergranadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 4 and then to SS-Unterführerschule *Arnheim*. Eberwein had also served in 4. SS-Polizei-Panzergranadier-Division in the East before commanding SS-Infanterie-Geschütz-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 2.



These German prisoners of war are probably from Krafft's SS-Panzergranadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16. On 17 September, 2./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16 was in Hotel Wolfheze providing security for Generalfeldmarschall Model and moved out to attack LZ Z. When 4./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16 and Krafft's heavy-weapons platoons arrived from Oosterbeek during the afternoon of 17 September, they were deployed on the northern flank. The anti-aircraft platoon remained at Hotel Wolfheze, the mortar platoon was deployed 300m to the south and two guns from the anti-tank platoon were positioned by the hotel to cover the road, while the other gun was with SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans Heinrich Köhnken's 2./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16. A reserve platoon was sent to the north of the railway line; with the help of the machine-gun section of 2./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16, this force ambushed a reconnaissance patrol of jeeps at 1525hrs. At 1730hrs, 9./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16 attacked the Utrechtseweg–Wolfhezerweg road junction that had been captured by the British in an earlier attack. The German counter-attack failed despite the support of the anti-tank and mortar platoons. At 2005hrs, having delayed the advance of the British from the landing area and thinking his battalion was surrounded, Krafft ordered a retreat. By 2230hrs his unit was with SS-Sturmbannführer Ludwig Spindler's Kampfgruppe *Spindler* in northern Oosterbeek and he was ordered to report to Harzer rather than Tettau. (© IWM BU 1159)

At 1900hrs on 17 September, Lippert was ordered to report to Tettau in Grebbeberg; he arrived at 2100hrs. Immediately, there was tension between the two men. Tettau told Lippert they did not have a chance of victory. Lippert disagreed and was disgusted at the lack of organization at Tettau's headquarters. Lippert had no radio or telephone communication with Tettau. Their relationship was tense and Tettau would relieve Lippert after a heated argument on 24 September.

By contrast, the arrangements on the eastern side of the Oosterbeek perimeter were in the hands of the more experienced officers of 9. SS-Panzer-Division *Hohenstaufen* and were more effective. SS-Rottenführer Dombrowski, a man not fond of officers, regarded SS-Hauptsturmführer

Möller, commander of SS-Panzer-Pionier-Batallion 9 and formerly an *SS-Unterscharführer* commanding a combat-engineer platoon in SS-Regiment *Der Führer*, with grudging respect. During the ensuing battle, Möller would get himself forward and observe the battle from the front in order to decide where best to provide supporting fire while his company commanders led the attack.

The communications available to German company commanders relied upon a portable backpack radio called the *Tornister Funkgerät* (Torn Fu). In contrast to their British counterparts, German platoon commanders did not have radios; SS-Unterscharführer Wilhelm Kirchhoff, serving in 6./SS-Btl *Eberwein*, described how messages between platoons had to be passed by hand, meaning the platoons had to operate independently (Gerritsen 2018). Weighing 17kg, the Torn Fu d2 ‘Dora 2’ was the most common radio; operating on 33.8–38MHz, it had a range of 6.4km with voice and could be used on the move. The Torn Fu g ‘Gustav’ was used by *Panzergrenadiere* to maintain contact with their half-tracks. Earlier radios that some units might still have operated in 1944 were heavier and could not be used on the move. *Feld Funkgerät* (Feld Fu) field radios were portable, but had to be used while stationary. *Funkgerät* radios were used in armoured vehicles. Field telephones were employed, as was the Dutch telephone system.

Ginkel Heath and LZ L

18–20 September 1944

BACKGROUND TO BATTLE

At 1330hrs on 17 September, 7 KOSB landed. Of the 56 gliders that took off (carrying 740 officers and men), ten were missing: seven crashed in England, two ditched in the North Sea, and one in Zeeland. The gliders that failed to arrive were carrying one platoon of both B Coy and D Coy, three MMG sections, three mortar detachments and two anti-tank guns (a third was damaged in its glider on the landing zone). Five gliders carrying ammunition trailers and jeeps, along with a sixth glider carrying 10 Pl (C Coy), would arrive with the second lift.

The tug towing Lieutenant Charles Doig's 7 Pl of B Coy did not reach the required height and decided to release the glider over England rather than risk a crash into power lines. Lance Corporal D. McGlynn of the MMG platoon shared his glider with five others from his section; they were bringing in a jeep and trailer. McGlynn's tug was hit over the North Sea and the pilots decided to release the tow rope. The glider ditched in the sea and bounced on the surface; the passengers clambered on to the wreckage and were rescued by a launch. Another glider carrying a platoon from D Coy crashed in Zeeland as the tug had trouble with an engine and the tug pilot decided to return to base. The tug cast off the glider and the glider pilot crash-landed in a field. The platoon was soon spotted and was forced to surrender. The men and equipment that did not reach the landing zone on 17 September did so the following day, with the exception of the two loads that had ditched in the North Sea.

SS-Obersturmführer Karl Labahn's 7./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 4 was the only German unit in the town of Ede. Labahn had received the German Cross in Gold while serving with SS-Polizei-Regiment 2 in Russia, where he also had a leg amputated. In June 1943 he was sent to Ede to command 7./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 4. Elements of Kapitänleutnant Harder's 20. Schiffs-Stamm-Abteilung were to the south of Labahn's position; soon these Kriegsmarine personnel would also be supported by two companies of Sicherungs-

Regiment 26, formed in May 1944 with two battalions each of four companies and tasked with guarding installations. Near Ede, SS-Wach-Bataillon 3 – minus 2./SS-WachBtl 3, which was elsewhere – was also put on alert. SS-Unterscharführer G. Wenig's platoon from 7./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 4 was attached to 4./SS-WachBtl 3.



Along with his own battalion, Krafft would assume command of two Kriegsmarine manning units to attack the landing zone on 19 September. Marine-Kampfgruppe 642 had formed in Zwolle, where the reception centre for retreating Kriegsmarine personnel was located; Leutnant zur See Steckel and Leutnant zur See Doodt were in command of 303 personnel. 1./1. FlottStammRgt from Zutphen had 120 personnel equipped with nine machine guns and three 2cm guns. Here, reinforcements wait patiently to be told where to go. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101III-M2KBK-772-05 Foto: Höppner, Willi)

Most of the gliders made good landings on the landing zone. Two encroached into a wood and their occupants suffered some casualties. A glider with 6-pdr gun commanded by Sergeant George C. Barton crashed into the trees; the pilots died from their injuries. The gun and trailer were eventually recovered and Barton joined B Coy with the rest of the crew. Lieutenant-Colonel Payton-Reid knew which gliders had arrived because each officer or NCO in charge of a glider handed the intelligence officer a disc that was put on a board. The battalion was ready to move off at 1500hrs; 7 KOSB was to protect Ginkel Heath, the zone where 4th Parachute Brigade would land the next day. Then they would move to another landing zone that gliders of the third lift would use on 19 September.

The companies of 7 KOSB were dispersed to guard Ginkel Heath. Major Robert G. Buchanan's A Coy was on the Ede–Arnhem road. A Coy's 4 Pl with a 6-pdr gun was positioned 3.2km away from the rest, closer to Ede, by a clearing near the woods, and formed a roadblock. B Coy and C Coy were

posted on the western side of the heath. Major Michael B. Forman, OC B Coy, had a clear view 450m to the north-west and 900m to the east; he had no reserve, because Lieutenant Charles Doig's 7 Pl had not arrived. HQ Coy and D Coy were located to the south, near an embankment built for a new road. Led by Captain George C. Gourlay, 2IC D Coy, 16 Pl was sent to a group of houses (a civilian work camp) in the landing area 400m from the woods, as Payton-Reid wanted the work camp occupied to prevent the Germans from gaining the position.

Payton-Reid could not maintain communication effectively with his companies because the radios were not working satisfactorily. Telephone line was laid out, but was ineffective because of the distance involved and breakages. Payton-Reid's men had prepared defences by 1900hrs on 17 September; intelligence gathered from locals suggested that Ede was garrisoned by about 600 men. In the early evening, SS-Hauptsturmführer E. Bartsch's 4./SS-WachBtl 3 arrived in the battalion transport, followed by SS-Obersturmführer Karl Hink's 3./SS-WachBtl 3. They were both fired at by elements of 7 KOSB. The Germans could do little in the darkness and waited until dawn when they attacked 4 Pl of A Coy south of the café on the main road.



SS-Sturmabteilungsführer Ludwig Spindler, CO SS-Panzer-Artillerie-Regiment 9, had the support of ten SdKfz 250 armoured personnel carriers of SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 9. These were committed on the Ede road on 17 September, then against the eastern side of LZ L. Here an SdKfz 250 is shown on the Dreijenseweg looking towards Oosterbeek. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101II-M2KBK-771-30 Foto: Höppner, Willi)

At 0600hrs on 18 September, Payton-Reid decided to attack the woods to the north of the eastern side of Ginkel Heath where the Germans were thought to be located. He ordered Major Charles G. Sherriff, OC D Coy, to use two platoons to push into the wood through the buildings occupied by the platoon with Gourlay. Supporting fire would be provided by a platoon from A Coy and MMGs and mortars with B Coy. Sherriff was fired on when he approached the buildings and found his platoon there practically surrounded; the position was being attacked by SS-Obersturmführer H. Kuhne's 5./SS-WachBtl 3. SS-Sturmabführer Paul Helle, CO SS-Wach-Bataillon 3, had decided to attack the heath with four of his companies, with one company and the heavy-weapons platoon in reserve. Gourlay had lost the radio link to his 3in mortars that morning. His losses included seven dead or mortally wounded, including the platoon sergeant, and six wounded, including the two officers; the rest would surrender. Sherriff reported this to Payton-Reid, who sent a platoon of C Coy to Gourlay's aid while Sherriff pressed on around the buildings to the woods where the Germans were infiltrating south along the eastern border of Ginkel Heath. Nothing was heard from Sherriff for the rest of the day. The British could not retake the buildings because of the long range and folds in the ground that offered the Germans considerable cover.

The north-western corner, defended by B Coy that was short of one platoon, was also threatened. The single anti-tank gun with B Coy fired on some vehicles driving on the main road to Ede. A half-track was hit; the infantry inside baled out and were fired on by a Vickers MMG. While digging entrenchments, Lieutenant Alexander D.M. Murray's 5 Pl was attacked by 3./SichRgt 26; the Germans emerged from the scrubland firing a machine gun. The sergeant in charge of the 3in mortar supporting 5 Pl shortened the range by placing sandbags beneath the bipod and dispersed the enemy by firing from 140m. A 75mm artillery bombardment was also effective in preventing other Germans from establishing positions that were 1.2km north of the main road.



This German soldier, pictured near Oosterbeek, has a *Schiessbecher* (grenade launcher) attached to his rifle. Introduced in 1942, the launcher could be fitted to a Kar 98k rifle and the sights were calibrated for the weapon to be fired out to 250m. Various types of ammunition could be fired, but the armour-piercing grenade was common; the anti-tank and high-explosive grenades were rare in comparison. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101II-M2KBK-771-03 Foto: Höppner, Willi)

At 1509hrs, 4th Parachute Brigade started to arrive. British mortar fire was directed on areas where the Germans were thought to be strongest and smoke was laid to protect the landings. Parts of the heath were already on fire. The last nine Dakota transport aircraft overshot and men parachuted over German positions further north; many paratroopers landed in trees, but managed to reach the open heath. Some overwhelmed the Dutch SS personnel, who were surprised to find them in the woods. Elements of 3./SS-WachBtl 3 and 4./SS-WachBtl 3 attempted to form defensive 'hedgehogs', but were destroyed as fighting forces; SS-Obersturmführer H. Fernau, OC 6./SS-WachBtl 3, was captured, and Kuhne fled. SS-Hauptscharführer Eienkel, the commander of the guard battalion's heavy-weapons platoon, was a veteran and carried out an orderly withdrawal. SS-Obersturmführer Johannes Bronkhorst's 1./SS-WachBtl 3, initially kept in reserve, moved forward to the farm at Hindkamp. The remnants of SS-Wach-Bataillon 3 retreated to Ede that evening; by 20 September the battalion was moved south and given to SS-Sturmbannführer Eugen Eberwein to command. Wenig's platoon of 7./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 4 was attached to 7./SS-Btl *Eberwein*.

Ginkel Heath and LZ L, 18–20 September 1944

5 Morning, 19 September: Kampfgruppe *Krafft* advances south with (east to west) 9./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16, 4./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16, Marine-Kampfgruppe 642 and 1./1. FlottStammRgt. A Coy fires on SS-Obersturmführer Günther Leiteritz's 9./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16 as the German unit approaches the Ede road.

6 Early afternoon, 19 September: HQ Coy and D Coy ambush 9./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16 when it advances out of the woods onto the landing zone. Leiteritz is killed and his company retreats with heavy casualties.

7 1430–1500hrs, 19 September: The gliders of the third lift arrive and B Coy helps with the unloading. Orders are given to prepare to retreat south of the railway line once the unloading is complete.

8 Afternoon, 19 September: Elements of Kampfgruppe *Krafft* catch A Coy in the open while retreating. The British surrender, but the rearguard escapes.

9 Early evening, 19 September: Major Michael B. Forman's B Coy reach the railway line after halting a German attack. Forman is ordered to go to Hotel Wolfheze. 10 Para and 156 Para retreat, with some elements going to Wolfheze to keep the level-crossing open.

10 Early morning, 20 September: Forman decides to retreat from Wolfheze, but B Coy is surrounded and surrenders to SS-Bataillon *Schulz* and SS-Bataillon *Eberwein*. The rest of the 7 KOSB personnel reach the Oosterbeek perimeter.

Battlefield environment

7 KOSB was tasked with defending the landing area for the third lift, which was situated north of the railway line and south of the Ede road. Here, LZ L comprised open heathland that had some buildings and was bordered by woods. Some companies would stay in the farm in the landing area, while others were based in the woods surrounding the ground upon which the gliders would land.



On 19 September, the Germans to the north of LZ L had the advantage of being able to approach through woods to close with 7 KOSB positions that were deployed in defence of the area in which the gliders would land, across the expanse of the heath and on its boundaries. Here, a German soldier with MP 40 is shown on heathland near Oosterbeek in September 1944. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101II-M2KBK-771-45 Foto: Höppner, Willi)

INTO COMBAT

Following their landing, the parachute battalions found that they were each 100 men down (20 per cent). At 1800hrs, D Coy, 7 KOSB emerged from the woods. At 1900hrs, the other companies of 7 KOSB moved off north-east towards their objective on the north side of the railway line, with B Coy leading, followed by Bn HQ, S Coy and C Coy. Their task was to protect the landing area near Johannahoeve Farm for the third lift on 19 September. Having already moved off along the Amsterdamseweg because they were not in contact with Bn HQ, the personnel of A Coy dug in when fired on and became isolated from the rest of 7 KOSB.

Having landed with 7 Pl with the second lift south of the railway line, Doig reported to brigade headquarters to enquire about the position of his battalion. His radio was not working. The staff captain advised him to follow the railway line and he soon reached Bn HQ. Lieutenant Albert E.F. Wayte's 10 Pl also arrived safely. The mortar detachment that returned to base on 17 September because of engine problems with their tug (the tow rope was too tight and part of the roof of the glider was torn off) again failed to reach the

battalion; they arrived at the original landing zone and were surrounded by a German patrol.

Once past Johannahoeve Farm, B Coy experienced heavy and close-range fire in complete darkness. Lieutenant Douglas Murray was killed and Sergeant Shaw wounded. The company retreated to the farm. Major Gordon Dinwiddie's C Coy was ordered into the woods 450m south of the farm. By 0600hrs on 19 September, Bn HQ had moved to the farm. D Coy was positioned 450m to the north. Payton-Reid was told that his battalion had been assigned to Brigadier John W. Hackett's 4th Parachute Brigade. Hackett gave orders that 7 KOSB would form a strong base to facilitate the attack of 10 Para and 156 Para towards the Dreijenseweg and guard the landing zone at the same time. Payton-Reid moved a platoon from D Coy 450m west and B Coy 640m west to positions that overlooked the southern and western ends of the landing zone. Payton-Reid ordered Major Forman to clear the woods to the south-west that lay next to the railway line. Forman deployed a platoon to each of the corners and moved to the platoon in the north-western corner. B Coy was strafed by some Bf 109s, but no casualties resulted. Wayte's 10 Pl, ordered to join A Coy the previous day, was on the main road in trenches which were complete by early morning. Wayte's men were also attacked by Luftwaffe fighters and endured a heavy mortar barrage. Wayte was already seriously wounded, having accompanied a patrol in the woods during the evening of 18 September.



The size of the area 7 KOSB had to defend was large, and elements of Kampfgruppe *Krafft* were able to infiltrate patrols through spaces in the line. The advance of Kriegsmarine units of

Kampfgruppe *Krafft* on 19 September was virtually unopposed. Here, a German patrol is moving along a ditch north of Oosterbeek. (Bundesarchiv Bild 183-S73822 Foto: Pospesch)



German soldiers advance cautiously through damaged buildings near Oosterbeek. The German advance into the northern perimeter was hesitant. The soldiers of 7 KOSB had the advantage of cover, but the Germans would use armour and mortars to make buildings uninhabitable. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-590-2333-30 Foto: Appe [Arppe])

2./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16 was detached to Kampfgruppe *Möller* on 18 September; on that day the other companies of SS-Sturmabführer Josef Krafft's SS-Panzergranadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16 replenished their stocks of ammunition, fuel and rations. On 19 September, Spindler asked Krafft to form a larger *Kampfgruppe* including 1./1. FlottStammRgt, 10./SS-PolRgt 3 and the battalion-strength Marine-Kampfgruppe 642. These units had boarded vehicles earlier on in the day with orders to start a broad advance south and make contact with Generalleutnant Tettau's battalions advancing from the west. The first objective was the Ede road, then the wood 800m south of the road and then the railway line. SS-Panzergranadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16 was on the eastern wing.

During its advance, Kampfgruppe *Krafft* was supported by a heavy bombardment that set fire to some of the farm buildings by the early afternoon. Kauer's 4./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16 headed through the woods to the road; Leiteritz's 9./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16, further east, had to move across open ground to get to the road. Buchanan's A Coy was missing a platoon, but ambushed Leiteritz's men advancing on a building on the main road; 9./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16 pressed on, however, and reached the building. Kauer also hit Buchanan's company. The Kriegsmarine personnel further west met little resistance and they reached the road by the woods to the north of the landing zone.

Robert Payton-Reid

Born in Foulden in Scotland on 31 July 1897, Robert Payton-Reid fought in World War I with The King's Own Scottish Borderers. During the inter-war period he served in Africa, the Middle East and Malta. He was a major when he was assigned to 7 KOSB on 26 January 1942 as the battalion second-in-command. He spent two months with the battalion before promotion to lieutenant-colonel, after which he was sent to 1 KOSB on 30 March as their commanding officer. General Bernard L. Montgomery thought Payton-Reid was too old to lead a battalion, and so he was removed from command and sent back to 7 KOSB as their commanding officer on 25 October 1943. Payton-Reid had a reputation for being more severe with his officers than with the soldiers.

When Payton-Reid landed during Operation *Market Garden* he had a piper playing to guide his men to the battalion rendezvous. When 4th Parachute Brigade arrived on 19 September, Payton-Reid led a charge into the woods. He then distributed orders for the withdrawal to the other side of the railway line and was present when 7 KOSB ambushed 9./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16. With fewer than 300 men, Payton-Reid's 7 KOSB would defend the northern side of the Oosterbeek perimeter, initially based on Hotel Dreyeroord. When the hotel was captured on 21 September he

led a bayonet charge that recaptured the building. He was looked after by glider pilot Sergeant Russell F. Tilley, who had joined up with 7 KOSB after the landing. Payton-Reid was the only British battalion commander to be evacuated from Oosterbeek. He was awarded the Distinguished Service Order for his leadership during the battle and the citation mentioned the counter-attack on Hotel Dreyeroord that he personally led. Payton-Reid rebuilt 7 KOSB and was promoted colonel in February 1945. After the war, Payton-Reid commanded 2 KOSB in Peshawar, India, for two years prior to that battalion's disbandment. He retired in 1948, living in Essex until his death on 1 November 1971.

HQ Coy and D Coy around Johannhoeve Farm then ambushed 9./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16 as it advanced out of the woods. Sergeant A. Parker was manning a Vickers MMG; Major Alexander V. Cochran, OC HQ Coy, was firing a Bren gun. Leiteritz was killed during this advance, and his company retreated into the woods. The successful British defence would enable both HQ Coy and D Coy to withdraw in good order. Shortly after the attack, the landings began.

Soldiers from 10 Para were retreating from their attempts to advance through the woods into northern Arnhem and B Coy, 7 KOSB was assisting the unloading of the gliders during 1430–1500hrs. While this was happening, Hackett told Payton-Reid that a German force was approaching from the west, to the north of the railway line. Payton-Reid was told that 7 KOSB was to defend the Royal Engineers detachment that was preparing a crossing point over the railway line 180m east of Wolfheze Station (the line was built on a very high embankment) in order that vehicles could withdraw to a perimeter forming around Oosterbeek. The soldiers would cross at the level-crossing in Wolfheze and rendezvous 450m south of the railway station. Payton-Reid personally told Lieutenant Doig from B Coy that once the unloading of the gliders was completed, his company would cover the withdrawal. Bn HQ, D Coy and A Coy were closely involved in repelling German attacks; Payton-Reid told Bn HQ of the withdrawal order in person and radioed the other companies. The order was passed to 10 Para to give to A Coy, 7 KOSB, as no radio link with that company could be established.

Josef Krafft

Born in Munich on 10 May 1905, Josef Krafft joined the police in 1924. He did some military service with the artillery and police-officer training. After Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler, the head of the SS, took over the police service, Krafft served in his office, holding the rank of *SS-Hauptsturmführer* in September 1939. In March 1941 Krafft was sent to SS-Division *Das Reich* with the same rank as he held in the police; commanding a company in SS-Regiment *Germania*, he was commended for his bravery during Operation *Barbarossa* when the Soviets launched a counter-attack in the summer of 1941. In December 1941 he was evacuated to hospital because of the effects of the severe cold on the Eastern Front. He was by then a regular officer and *SS-Sturmbannführer*. In the spring of 1942 he was made a battalion commander in SS-Regiment *Deutschland*, but in the summer was moved to Himmler's office. He took Himmler's escort unit to Zhytomyr in the Ukraine where he carried out anti-partisan operations.

In April 1943, Krafft took over command of SS-Panzergranadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 12, renamed SS-Panzergranadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16 in September 1944. He had three companies stationed near Oosterbeek when the airborne landings occurred. He immediately positioned them to block entry into Arnhem and launched local counter-attacks prior to withdrawing his unit. He was then given responsibility for a larger battle group that was used to attack across the Ede–Arnhem road on 19 September. On 22 September his battle group was again reinforced, this time with Kriegsmarine personnel, and redeployed south of the Rhine to intercept British ground forces moving north from Nijmegen.

In October 1944, Krafft's SS-Panzergranadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16 was disbanded and the soldiers were sent to SS-Freiwilligen-Grenadier-Brigade *Landstorm Nederland*, later 34. SS-Freiwilligen-Grenadier-Division *Landstorm*

Nederland; Krafft was promoted *SS-Obersturmbannführer* and given command of a regiment within the unit. He surrendered to the Allies in May 1945. After the war he rejoined the police. He died on 4 March 1986.

The gliders were late in arriving, with seven lost on the way; 26 landed at LZ L and two elsewhere. The German reaction was immediate. A Coy suffered the most, and received orders to disengage and meet the gliders. Corporal D. Holt was attacked from the north and west; he and three others took three Bren guns and covered the rear, but A Coy would be surrounded en route to the railway line. Buchanan had a platoon from B Coy and three of his own platoons. Instead of going south to the railway line, the platoons went east; the company had to cross an area of open ground between woods. The leading platoon stopped short of the woods and the others followed. Then two German officers appeared, demanding that they surrender as there were machine guns in the woods 185m in front. German soldiers also revealed themselves to both sides; these were probably from 4./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16. Kauer ordered the 7 KOSB personnel to surrender. The 30-strong rearguard, from A Coy in the woods behind, managed to escape.

Other British personnel thought the Germans were friendly troops from the gliders and were captured. Private J. Coupland belonged to the anti-tank detachment that was with A Coy and was waved out of the woods by soldiers he thought were Poles; but they were Germans. A Coy would not arrive at the rendezvous south of the railway line. During the evening of 19 September Hackett told the platoon of A Coy that did reach the embankment to head to Wolfheze rather than south; the platoon would be surrounded the following morning.

The British withdrawal was chaotic; there was no unit cohesion and soldiers intermingled. Instead of moving to Wolfheze, many opted to climb the railway embankment, perhaps having not received the order to meet at the rendezvous point. A mortar team endeavoured to drag the hand cart over the embankment, but failed; many of the men became lost in the woods. In a small wood north of the railway line, Lance Corporal O'Neill Berry noticed some Germans pass a hand cart; he took the Bren from his gunner and fired and the hand cart exploded with a tremendous bang. Doig ordered a charge and the advancing Germans were dispersed. The hand cart, which had been commandeered by the Germans, had been carrying some anti-tank mines.

Forman then brought B Coy to the railway line, where Hackett told him that 7 KOSB was at Wolfheze and that he should go there to be sure, leaving his company at the embankment. Forman was soon fired on, and returned to the embankment. In the early hours of 20 September Forman was ordered to Hotel Wolfheze with three platoons in an effort to keep the railway crossing open. Hackett was subsequently criticized for not bringing his entire brigade over the railway line that evening; he discussed this over the radio with divisional headquarters, but was discouraged from making the move. Instead, he was advised to move first thing in the morning. Forman was thus in an exposed position and did not know that 1st Airborne Division was concentrating around Oosterbeek. Seeing that the hotel, surrounded by woods, was in a bad tactical position, Forman decided to withdraw that morning. 6./SS-Btl *Eberwein* and 8./SS-Btl *Eberwein* were closing in along the railway line and 2./SS-Btl *Schulz* was approaching from the south. Forman was 400m from the hotel, in a clearing in a wood, when his contingent suffered several casualties from machine-gun fire and noticed two mortars being brought into action. The Germans, approximately two companies, had followed them and were taking up position in front and behind. A lieutenant from 156 Para suggested charging with the bayonet, but Forman vetoed this course of action. There was no avenue of escape (he had to cross 185m of heather to reach the safety of the woods) and with supplies of ammunition depleted, Forman decided to surrender. SS-Obersturmführer Richard Kriftner, OC 2./SS-Btl *Schulz*, interrogated Forman and reported taking 228 prisoners of war.

C Coy, 7 KOSB was not engaged and joined 156 Para in retreating. Of the personnel of 4th Parachute Brigade who had landed on 19 September, only 500 of 2,300 soldiers reached Oosterbeek. 7 KOSB stayed on the railway line until all other elements had crossed to the southern side; the battalion was then sent to defend the White House (Hotel Dreijeroord), at the northern end of the Oosterbeek perimeter. By this point, 1st Airborne Division had one-third of the strength that had landed: 3,600 soldiers, including 900 glider pilots and 1,500 support personnel. The White House was in an exposed position. 7 KOSB would be asked to anchor the northern side of the salient.

The retreat to the Oosterbeek perimeter enabled the Allied forces to mount a solid defence. At the White House, Payton-Reid was in a salient that jutted out from the divisional area. Kampfgruppe *Krafft* was deployed elsewhere and Kampfgruppe *Bruhn* (comprising four companies of Panzergrenadier-

Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Regiment 57) was put into the line. The five anti-tank guns possessed by 7 KOSB were very active. On 20 September, Lieutenant Edward R.E. Carter, OC 6 Pl, escorted a 6-pdr gun to a position where German tanks were suspected. They fired at the stationary vehicles to get them moving; when a tank moved around a corner the gun, which had unhooked from its tow, destroyed the vehicle at 45m. The German self-propelled guns were more cautious after that, but they did achieve a position from where they could shell the White House. The building was soon rendered uninhabitable and Payton-Reid decided the house would be occupied only at night; during 20 September, 7 KOSB used positions further back to cover approaches. German snipers posed a significant threat and PIATs were used against buildings suspected of harbouring them. PIAT ammunition would soon become scarce if used in such a way, but a resupply canister that had been airdropped by the Royal Air Force was retrieved.



A view of the White House (Hotel Dreijeroord). The ground south of the railway line offered better prospects for defence. On 21 September the Germans brought in machine guns to support their occupation of the White House. A vigorous British counter-attack on the house and the Germans' flank was costly, but deterred any further advance; however, that afternoon another push by 100 German soldiers occupied trenches in front of the house. While holding

an order group to reorganize his battalion, Lieutenant-Colonel Payton-Reid decided to conduct a charge with the help of Major Alexander V. Cochran, OC HQ Coy, and Major Charles G. Sherriff, OC D Coy; the charge routed the Germans, though again the British suffered heavy casualties, including Cochran. Divisional headquarters received a message from the unit next to 7 KOSB – probably 21 Independent Parachute Company – that Payton-Reid's command had been destroyed because an officer and some soldiers of the battalion had fled into the neighbouring unit's position without weapons. This misunderstanding was soon corrected. During the night of 21/22 September, 7 KOSB conducted a successful withdrawal to a reduced perimeter, bringing out three anti-tank guns and four mortars.
(Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-495-3450A-10 Foto: Bankhard)



Kampfgruppe *Krafft* was able to use the woods to infiltrate past some 7 KOSB positions on the Ede road; however, the wide-open spaces of LZ S also needed to be crossed. Here, German soldiers take position in woods and prepare to support the advance into a nearby clearing. A parachute and supply container are shown nearby. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101II-M2KBK-771-10 Foto: Höppner, Willi)

On 23 September, following the retreat from the White House, the four company groups were down to about 30 soldiers each. Payton-Reid gave orders that armoured vehicles should be allowed to pass through the British positions as it was more important to counter the supporting infantry. He believed that somewhere in the perimeter, a marauding tank would be dealt with by other anti-tank guns. By the end of the day, only one platoon

commander, Lieutenant Carter, was unwounded; he escaped encirclement by throwing a smoke-mortar bomb he had fuzed to work like a smoke grenade. By that stage the perimeter was reduced to nine houses in groups of three on three streets. These buildings were fortified, with furniture barricading their entrances. Sentries at the windows and on the top storey reported German movement. There was to be no further British withdrawal until the retreat across the Rhine was ordered in the early morning of 26 September.

The Utrechtseweg

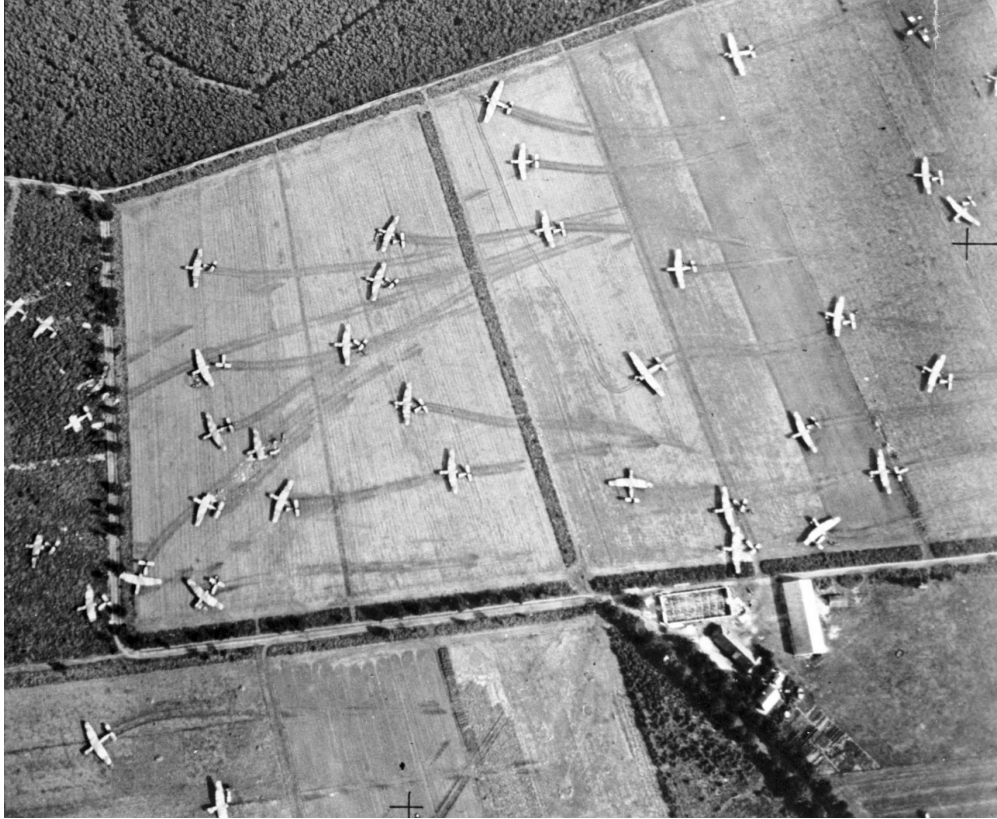
19 September 1944

BACKGROUND TO BATTLE

As the soldiers of 2 S Staffs unloaded their gliders on 17 September they were fired on by the machine-gun platoon of 2./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16, which had headed north to provide flank security. 21 Pl (D Coy) which had overshot the landing area, was hit, with two killed and seven wounded. The battalion dug in around Reijers Camp on LZ S, with two platoons of B Coy entering the village of Wolfheze. Lieutenant Hugh H.L. Cartwright, the signal officer, laid out telephone cable to the companies from Bn HQ.

At 0900hrs on 18 September, 2 S Staffs was preparing to receive the second lift when it was ordered to move into Arnhem to support the attack. Major-General Urquhart was missing and Brigadier Hicks took his position, with Colonel Barlow taking over 1st Airlanding Brigade. The battalion (420 soldiers) moved off by 1030hrs. D Coy was leading, then S Coy and Bn HQ, with B Coy at the rear. They would take seven hours to cover 8.5km to St Elisabeth's Hospital.

At Brummen, 32km to the north, SS-Hauptsturmführer Möller, who had fought here in May 1940 as a senior NCO in SS-Regiment *Der Führer*, was out walking when he noticed the landing taking place. He drove straight to divisional headquarters. Möller's 150-strong SS-Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 9 was organized into three platoons. He sent his first platoon ahead on Opel Blitz lorries. SS-Rottenführer Dombrowski, serving in SS-Untersturmführer Erhard Voss's 2./SS-PzPiBtl 9, thought he was about to go home to Germany; he only had a pistol with him. At 1630hrs Dombrowski's platoon was ambushed near the park called Den Brink and he recalled feeling vulnerable, not knowing where the British positions were (Kershaw 2004: 75). Some other companies of 9. SS-Panzer-Division *Hohenstaufen* were sent into Arnhem with only a rifle and 90 rounds per man; their helmets, ammunition pouches and entrenching tools would follow later as they were packed ready for the move back to Germany scheduled for that evening.



A view of LZ Z, where the gliders carrying divisional units landed. At 1030hrs on 17 September, 22 tugs and gliders took off, carrying half of 2 S Staffs. The tow rope of the glider towing Major Robert H. Cain, OC B Coy, broke; his glider ditched in England. A platoon from B Coy encountered anti-aircraft fire that hit their tow rope; the pilot crash-landed the glider in the Netherlands. At 1300hrs the remaining gliders started to arrive at LZ S, north of LZ Z. SS-Sturmmann K.H. Bangard, serving in the cadre staff of SS-Panzer Grenadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16, wrote how he noticed the gliders landing on the fields close to his position (Revell, Cherry & Gerritsen 2013: 58). (Bettmann/Getty Images)

SS-Sturmbannführer Spindler, CO SS-Panzer-Artillerie-Regiment 9, was ordered to form a blocking line in the west with his artillerymen that were fighting as infantry. Möller would assist him. Voss's 2./SS-PzPiBtl 9 met an *Alarmeinheiten* unit that had one 8.8cm and four 2cm guns north of the railway line. Two companies from Kampfgruppe *Spindler* would soon arrive to extend the German line. On 18 September Möller was given 2./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16 to assist him. The rest of Krafft's battalion took up position north of the railway line, supported by SS-Hauptsturmführer Klaus von Allwörden's Kampfgruppe *Allwörden*, composed of one company of SS-Panzerjäger-Abteilung 9 fielding two self-propelled guns and some towed anti-tank guns.

Bad weather delayed the take-off of the second lift carrying the rest of 2 S Staffs until 1045hrs on 18 September; most landed safely at 1530hrs. A glider with a 6-pdr anti-tank gun had to make a forced landing 16km from the landing zone when its tug was hit by anti-aircraft fire; the crew would manage to reach the battalion positions. Corporal J. Riley served in a mortar platoon; there was a jeep, a trailer and a motorcycle in his glider, which hit a fir tree on landing at high speed (Junier, Smulders & Korsloot 2004: 100). The front of the glider was smashed as it was driven against the tree and the tail unit was wedged against the ground. Riley was wounded by a large piece of wood through his leg and was evacuated. Private D. Morgan, a 6-pdr gunner, described how the quick-release bolts that attached the tail to the main body of the glider would not release properly and the tail had to be pushed off by a jeep from another glider that came to their assistance (Junier, Smulders & Korsloot 2004: 100).



Private Robert C. Edwards of 21 Pl, D Coy, 2 S Staffs recalled a route march down the Utrechtseweg from the landing area that seemed unreal; every 50 minutes they had a rest for 10 minutes (Junier, Smulders & Korsloot 2004: 93). They were prone to sniper attack from high buildings and their mobility broke down. The railway line blocked flanking moves around German positions, so Edwards' contingent made a detour to the south of the Utrechtseweg to avoid machine-gun fire from north of the railway line. Eventually they reached the positions of 1 Para. Here, soldiers and a 6-pdr anti-tank gun of 2 S Staffs are shown advancing along the Utrechtseweg on 18 September. (© IWM BU 1091)

Hicks decided to send the other half of 2 S Staffs into Arnhem to support the advance. This contingent moved off with A Coy in the lead, accompanied by a mortar section. One platoon of C Coy stayed at the landing zone to unload a glider that had its tail section stuck and then followed on, but would only reach the divisional headquarters in Oosterbeek. The two anti-tank platoons, a mortar platoon and the two Bren Gun Carriers were ordered by division to stay behind. The pioneer platoon was prevented from following the battalion because a German machine gun covered an area of open ground over which they had to move, and so the pioneers returned to divisional headquarters. C Coy was fired on by the German machine-gun platoon that had interdicted D Coy's advance earlier. Bn HQ was unaware of the progress of the second lift; Major Thomas B. Lane, OC A Coy, went ahead to report, but in doing so he lost contact with his company.

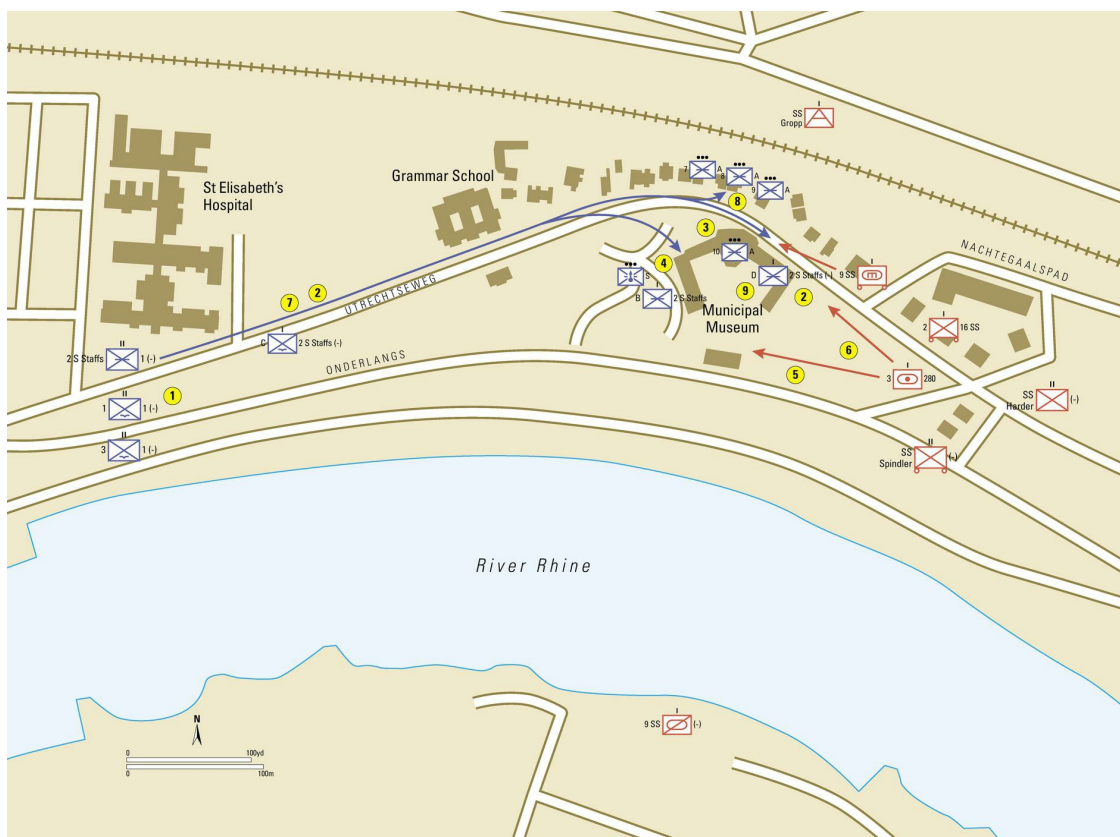
There was no senior British officer present in Arnhem to command the attack. Lieutenant-Colonel David T. Dobie, CO 1 Para, was effectively in charge. In the early evening of 18 September, McCardie visited Dobie at his headquarters. A two-battalion advance was planned for 2100hrs, with 2 S Staffs on the Utrechtseweg and 1 Para (70–80 soldiers) on the lower road. McCardie was not keen on the plan as the rest of 2 S Staffs had not yet arrived. The British received a report that the bridge across the Rhine had been captured by the Germans and the plan was cancelled. At 0100hrs, an order to withdraw to Oosterbeek was received. At 0230hrs, the report was corrected and the order to advance was given. Dobie held a battalion commanders' conference, but Lieutenant-Colonel John A.C. Fitch, CO 3 Para, was not in attendance. The attack would begin at 0400hrs; Dobie stressed the importance of completing the attack before dawn. Unknown to Dobie and McCardie, however, 3 Para had already moved forward on the lower road, advancing 800m and then encountering heavy opposition. 3 Para was withdrawing and Dobie met Captain Geoffrey R. Dorrien-Smith, 2IC B Coy, 3 Para. Dorrien-Smith tried to persuade Dobie not to advance because

the area was full of enemy mortars and machine guns, but Dobie decided to press on and Fitch ordered his 50 men to join Dobie's men; their attack on the lower road would diverge from 2 S Staffs' advance along the Utrechtseweg, which commenced at 0430hrs.



Equipped with seven StuG III Ausf G and three StuH 42 Ausf G self-propelled guns, Major Kurt Kühne's 3./StuGBrig 280 was being transported by rail and was in Hamburg when news of the landings arrived; it was immediately rerouted to Bocholt in the Ruhr, where its assets were offloaded and drove via Apeldoorn to Arnhem. Kühne's unit was divided into three platoons, two (1. Zug and 3. Zug) with three StuG III each and the third (2. Zug) with three StuH 42. Here is Kühne's own StuG III on 20 September; note the presence of *Zimmerit* anti-magnetic paint on the front of the hull. The StuG III Ausf G had a 7.5cm KwK L/48 gun that could fire anti-tank and high-explosive rounds, while the StuH 42 had a 10.5cm leFH 18 howitzer that could also fire both types of ammunition. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-497-3529-03 Foto: Jacobsen)

The Utrechtseweg, 19 September 1944



MAP KEY

1 0430hrs: 2 S Staffs advances along the Utrechtseweg; 1 Para and 3 Para advance along the lower road by the Rhine. Kampfgruppe *Möller*, comprising SS-Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 9 (company strength) and 2./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16, defends the Utrechtseweg.

2 0500hrs: D Coy reaches the open spaces east of St Elisabeth's Hospital; its personnel are targeted by cannon-fire from SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 9 south of the river and Kampfgruppe *Gropp* by the railway line. Despite mounting losses (50 per cent of their strength) the British press on to the municipal museum.

3 0530hrs: A Coy occupies the buildings to the north of the museum. Three platoons (7 PI, 8 PI and 9 PI) barricade themselves in, while 10 PI, the company headquarters and the regimental aid post are established on the first and second floors

of the museum. A British patrol reaches a building east of the museum, but is forced back.

4 c.0530hrs: Captain R. Foote's B Coy moves in through the bushes and trees and gathers in the wooded dell west of the museum.

5 0800hrs: A German counter-attack from the lower road is driven back with the assistance of mortars firing from the dell.

6 0900–1000hrs: Ten self-propelled guns (five on the lower road and five on the upper road) begin to fire on the 2 S Staffs positions. British soldiers in the museum use PIATs against the self-propelled guns on the lower road, but with little effect.

7 c.1045hrs: C Coy is unable to make further progress past the hospital owing to intensive German fire from across the river.

8 1045–1145hrs: Two self-propelled guns on the upper road target the building opposite the museum occupied by 8 Pl; an attempt to get a PIAT to the platoon fails. Lieutenant-Colonel William D.H. McCardie wants them to withdraw to the museum, but the road is too dangerous. The three platoons north of the museum surrender.

9 c.1145hrs: With PIAT ammunition depleted, the German self-propelled guns advance closer to the museum. McCardie tells Major Robert H. Cain to withdraw, covered by A Coy. Both officers escape before the Germans storm the museum.

Battlefield environment

The approach of 2 S Staffs along the Utrechtseweg gave the battalion little room for manoeuvre, as the railway embankment to the north prevented any flanking attack. The municipal museum, dubbed the 'monastery' in contemporary accounts, was the key feature, lying between the railway to the north and the river to the south. The British advance to the museum was interdicted from across the river. Casualties would be heavy as the battalion crossed the open ground between the hospital and school. South of the Utrechtseweg, the lower Onderlangs road was even more

vulnerable. German efforts to counter-attack towards the museum from this road were hampered by the slope.



During the early morning of 19 September, 2 S Staffs advanced up the Utrechtseweg into town and 1 Para and 3 Para moved forward on the lower road by the Rhine.
(Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-3530-33A Foto: Jacobsen)

INTO COMBAT

The Germans had pulled their line back 640–820m from where they had defended the previous day and covered an open space in front of their positions; on both sides they had 2cm guns that could not be suppressed by the lighter weapons of the British. The flanking forces of Kampfgruppe *Gropp* were positioned on the northern side of a railway cutting on an embankment and on the other side of the river (elements of SS-Panzer-Aufklärungs-Abteilung 9); the flanking forces were on different levels and would not be vulnerable to friendly fire. The British needed to close the range to stand any chance. In the centre, Kampfgruppe *Möller*, with two companies and two half-tracks, occupied the series of houses on the north side of the road that backed directly on to a deep railway cutting in the marshalling yards. Up front, a German outpost line ran east of St Elisabeth's Hospital. Kampfgruppe *Spindler* included two companies of artillerymen employed as infantry, located a little further back. SS-Sturmabführer Spindler's command also included elements of SS-Panzer Grenadier-Regiment 19 and SS-Panzer Grenadier-Regiment 20, formed into four companies.

At 0430hrs, 2 S Staffs advanced. At this point the battalion had 340 soldiers; D Coy was in the lead, followed by B Coy and A Coy, a mortar platoon and elements of the tactical Bn HQ. B Coy was led by Captain Reginald S. Foote because Major Robert H. Cain was late arriving. Sergeant Norman Howes described how the situation was unlike any other they had experienced; the men were advancing on a 50m front, but their training had emphasized a 350–550m front (Middlebrook 1995: 200). There was no cover on the road. Private R. Harvey of 22 Pl, which was leading, described how the Germans were waiting for them; he observed a file of British soldiers mown down like corn by machine guns (Junier, Smulders & Korsloot 2004: 107). 21 Pl took over the advance. The Germans had plenty of ammunition and their firing was probably prolific. In response, the British fired at unseen targets with little knowledge of whether hits were achieved. Private Robert C. Edwards from 21 Pl was reminded of a shooting gallery; the Germans simply could not fail to hit the British (Junier, Smulders & Korsloot 2004: 108). Captain Ernest M. Wyss, 2IC D Coy, encouraged the men to move forward when they faltered or hesitated.

At 0500hrs the leading platoons reached the open spaces east of the hospital and were fired on from the south bank of the river by 2cm and 3.7cm guns as they covered the ground to reach the wooded dell by the museum. By this point 19 Pl and 20 Pl had taken over the advance; while crossing this ground, Lieutenant Ernest Roebuck, OC 20 Pl, was killed. Major John E. Phillp, OC D Coy, was also hit, and Wyss took command; Edwards described how Wyss totally ignored the German fire (Junier, Smulders & Korsloot 2004: 108).

Despite heavy fire from its front and both flanks that caused losses of 50 per cent, D Coy cleared a series of German outposts and advanced 275m further before being forced to go to ground. The company's advance compelled German machine-gun crews to abandon their positions opposite the museum; a 2cm gun was left behind as the Germans hastily withdrew. German patrols from the lower road were beginning to advance to interdict the Utrechtseweg, but were driven back. Foote's B Coy moved through the bushes and trees south of the road and gathered in the wooded dell west of the municipal museum. Here, two mortars were stationed, 18m from the museum; the other mortars of the mortar platoon were separated and their ammunition hand cart was hit by a grenade.

Once it reached the area, A Coy was ordered to occupy the houses to the north of the museum and the men of the company fought their way into these buildings. Three platoons – Lieutenant William C. Withnall's 7 Pl, Lieutenant Alan E. Barker's 8 Pl and Lieutenant Geoffrey W. Glassborow's 9 Pl – barricaded themselves in the buildings, while 10 Pl, the company headquarters and the regimental aid post took position on the first and second floors of the museum. Glassborow sent a patrol to identify a position in front of the house held by 9 Pl, but the patrol was captured. Lance Sergeant R. Brown of 7 Pl took his section to the first floor of 7 Pl's building and positioned his Bren gunner, Private John W. Holloway, to cover the northern side over the shunting yard; they shot at two lorries full of Germans early in the battle, but soon the enemy fire intensified and Holloway was hit. At No. 83 Utrechtseweg, to the east of the museum, the Germans had positioned a machine gun in the garden and another on the flat roof, and had barricaded the door. They thought the British were in No. 85, adjacent to them, on the ground floor. Elements of 2 S Staffs that might have reached here were driven out and retreated to No. 72, opposite the museum. The battalion had moved forward 595m to the museum; then, between 0600hrs and 0630hrs, there was a relative period of calm.

McCardie asked that 11 Para be brought forward in order to attack round the flank along the railway line, but this would take time. When Major-General Urquhart returned to his headquarters (the advance had permitted him to evade nearby German soldiers), he ordered 11 Para to wait until Colonel Barlow arrived to take command of the counter-attack. This message never reached McCardie, however. Soon after, Barlow was killed by a mortar blast.

The positions of 2 S Staffs, 320m in front of those on the lower road, were vulnerable. At 0700hrs, the morning light appeared. C Coy reported to Bn HQ and stayed west of the hospital in reserve. Cain met McCardie at the hospital and told him of incessant machine-gun and 2cm fire ricocheting off the buildings because of fire from south of the river (Junier, Smulders & Korsloot 2004: 112). The two officers then made their way to the dell. At 0800hrs a German counter-attack took a building south of the museum, but the Germans were soon thrown out. Further German attempts to advance towards the British positions on the slope were targeted by mortars firing at a high angle. Private William F. Hewitt from the mortar platoon reported that his mortar was not stable because of the slope; a German armoured vehicle

then appeared, firing at his unit's position and forcing them to move, with some taking cover in the museum (Junier, Smulders and Korsloot 2004: 114). Major Kurt Kühne's StuG-Brigade 280 had arrived. With five of the brigade's self-propelled guns now on the lower road and five on the Utrechtseweg, McCardie called to Wyss to do something about them. Wyss went back and re-appeared with some PIATs; he fired off a shot but was hit by machine-gun fire. Lieutenant Albert E. Boustead, OC 22 Pl and the only unwounded officer, took over command of D Coy.

Members of B Coy in the museum could see the five self-propelled guns on the lower road. Between 0900hrs and 1000hrs, the vehicles advanced with their supporting soldiers close by, and Cain's men used mortars without secondary charges as the range was so short. The self-propelled guns could see the B Coy men and returned fire. Lieutenant Georges Dupenois intended to use his PIAT from the higher floors; Cain and Major John S.A. Buchanan, OC S Coy, accompanied him, but could see nothing. Then a warning shout went up; a self-propelled gun had been spotted on the lower road. Dupenois fired first; the PIAT bomb went through some branches and hit the enemy vehicle, but it was able to lumber away and out of sight. Cain was obtaining some PIAT ammunition when the self-propelled guns moved against positions on the upper road. When Sergeant Howes of 10 Pl heard McCardie shout for him to bring a PIAT to target the German armour, he prepared one of the anti-tank weapons with a case of three bombs. Sergeant Howse, McCardie's bodyguard, had also heard the commanding officer and Howes happily handed the weapon over to him when Howse asked.

The PIAT gunners attempted to move into position to fire at the side or rear armour of the self-propelled guns and force them to withdraw. The PIAT gunners were supported by Bren gunners who fired to keep each self-propelled-gun's commander inside his vehicle. As soon as the PIAT was fired, at a range of 90–130m, the gunner would move off, as retaliatory shelling would start soon. Dupenois fired 10–20 PIAT rounds; one round hit the side armour of a self-propelled gun on the lower road, but failed to penetrate. *Schürzen* armour side plating offered some protection to the vehicles, but the gun had limited traverse and a track had to be locked to swivel the vehicle around to point at a target not directly in front of it.



Private Edwards described how German mortar fire would be followed by attacks from enemy armour (Junier, Smulders & Korsloot 2004: 115). When the self-propelled guns were driven off, another German bombardment would begin. By 1000hrs on 19 September, Möller noticed that the British responses were fragmented; by 1300hrs, German fire was unrelenting as they had plenty of ammunition (Kershaw 2004: 172). Here, the self-propelled guns assigned to support the German advance on Utrechtseweg have already moved past the museum.
(Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-497-3531-06 Foto: Jacobsen)

McCardie told Private Edwards (operating a 2in mortar) to take a message to C Coy. Edwards reached C Coy nearly an hour later; Major Philip R.T. Wright, OC C Coy, was pessimistic about the situation, but advanced towards the dell. Along with his headquarters staff, Wright disappeared in a welter of mortar bombs. C Coy stayed west of the hospital, having covered only 400m as the Germans were interdicting the company's route to the dell. McCardie would receive no reinforcements.

A self-propelled gun advanced along the Utrechtseweg and fired at the buildings opposite the museum. After another self-propelled gun advanced in support, both fired at the ground floor of the building occupied by 8 Pl, threatening to demolish the structure. The building was soon on fire and 8 Pl

sent a request for a PIAT to company headquarters in the museum. Private Percival W. Collett was sent with a PIAT, but was killed by a shell fired from one of the self-propelled guns. McCardie asked Major Thomas B. Lane, OC A Coy, whether he could withdraw his platoons on the north side of the road to the museum. Cain noticed Barker in a doorway and called him over to report. Cain then went back to Bn HQ, 100m to the rear, in search of more PIAT bombs, but was told by the regimental sergeant major that none were available. SS-Hauptsturmführer Möller described how rubble lay everywhere, from fences and walls knocked down by the self-propelled guns (Kershaw 2004: 171). German soldiers protecting the self-propelled guns had to be careful not to be knocked down by a reversing vehicle. SS-Obersturmführer K. Steiner's 1./SS-PzPiBtl 9 was using *Panzerfäuste* and was helped by 2./SS-PzPiBtl 9, now led by SS-Hauptscharführer Josef 'Sepp' Schmatz, and the two armoured personnel carriers of 3./SS-PzPiBtl 9. Wounded soldiers in the street could not be recovered.

At the dell, the men of the mortar platoon were targeted by grenades exploding over their heads. 2 S Staffs held off the attack until 1130hrs, by which time the PIAT ammunition was depleted, allowing the self-propelled guns to close the range. McCardie told Cain to pull out; he would be covered by A Coy. When the British retreat from the museum began, an enemy attack started; unnoticed, the Germans had entered a house about 18m from the museum and used holes blasted in the walls to enter the museum. There were about 40 soldiers of 2 S Staffs in the museum; those on the upper levels were soon taken prisoner, but those on the lower basement level continued to fight. From here, Howes returned to ground level to look for the platoon hand cart and was confronted by two Germans; he darted back down but they followed, throwing grenades. Howes fired his Sten submachine gun and this deterred his pursuers. Company Sergeant Major Victor D. Williams asked for Howes' Sten magazines and sent Howes to organize the evacuation of the wounded. Private Samuel J. Montgomery was in the museum's cellar and could hear a self-propelled-gun commander ordering his gunner to shoot (Junier, Smulders & Korsloot 2004: 117). Williams and Howes successfully escaped to the dell; others, looking after the wounded, had no choice other than to surrender.

Action on the Utrechtseweg, 19 September



British view: During the early morning of 19 September, 2 S Staffs was tasked with advancing into Arnhem down the Utrechtseweg. The battalion was on a short frontage, between the railway line on a high embankment to the north and the lower road down a slope behind the municipal museum to the south. A Coy fought its way into the houses immediately north of the museum. Three platoons barricaded themselves in the buildings along the north side of the road, while a fourth platoon, the company headquarters and the regimental aid post established themselves on the first and second floors of the museum, shown here on the right. At 0700hrs the morning light appeared, halting any further advance. Then 3./StuGBrig 280 arrived. Five StuG III Ausf G self-propelled guns were sent on to the Utrechtseweg sometime after 0900hrs. Once the PIAT anti-tank ammunition was depleted, the self-propelled guns moved forward. One of the self-propelled guns is shown in the distance about to reach the end of the museum; some British soldiers have decided to escape before the vehicle reaches them. A PIAT gunner by the building defended by 7 Pl is preparing to fire his weapon if the vehicle approaches any closer. A Bren gun team covers the withdrawal of others from the museum; by them is a 2cm anti-aircraft gun that was abandoned by the Germans earlier in the battle.



German view: The first units of SS-Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 9 arrived in Arnhem on 17 September. By the early evening of 18 September, the unit commander, SS-Hauptsturmführer Hans Möller, had formed a defensive line further back; by the early morning of 19 September, although Möller had been reinforced by 2./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16, his *Kampfgruppe* was pushed back east of the municipal museum. With the arrival of 3./StuGBrig 280 he was able to mount a counter-attack. Here, a StuG III is shown near the museum. Behind the self-propelled gun stands an NCO equipped with an MP 40 submachine gun and wearing an M1942 smock in oakleaf camouflage and *Erbsenmuster* ('Pea-Dot') camouflage trousers. An MG 42 machine-gunner with one 50-round drum fitted and a machine-gun tool kit on his belt is waiting to enter the building opposite. The soldier behind the tree is armed with a Kar 98k rifle and wears an M44 field blouse and trousers. A tarpaulin covers a large ammunition compartment on the rear of the self-propelled gun. The vehicle has foliage attached to aid concealment.

McCardie had not wanted to retreat, but soon changed his mind when a shell from a self-propelled gun blew a bush out of the ground close to where he was standing. Cain told McCardie he was going to get as many men as he could out from the dell. Cain and others then made a dash to the other side of the road in full view of a self-propelled gun; they reached the school followed by two vehicles that were systematically shelling every building as they made their way down the road. McCardie followed, accompanied by Lance Corporal George Parry of the signals platoon, and felt the heat from the

burning buildings opposite (Junier, Smulders & Korsloot 2004: 121). The next move was to reach the trenches outside Villa Rhijnstein. Personnel from Bn HQ and others were there to help. McCardie occupied a building on the other side of the road by the school. There was no getting out of this position; McCardie found himself on the ground covered in debris with two German soldiers pointing their guns at him (Middlebrook 1995: 205).

A 6-pdr anti-tank-gun screen behind 2 S Staffs kept the self-propelled guns at bay near the Klingelbeeksweg road junction. SS-Rottenführer Dombrowski reached an Esso garage where 10–15 soldiers of 2 S Staffs were sheltering. His Sten, acquired during a previous engagement, was damaged by splinters. A Bren gun guarded the door. The men inside the garage surrendered and Dombrowski grabbed another Sten. Möller interrogated an Irish captain of 2 S Staffs discovered in the garage; the officer was surprised to discover that Waffen-SS soldiers were their opponents.

By midday on 19 September the British survivors numbered only about 100 men. Sergeant Palmer from 1 MMG Pl organized a Vickers MMG to cover the withdrawal. Cain assumed command, assembling the remnants that joined with the uncommitted C Coy into five composite platoons; he had four officers and two warrant officers. Cain had orders to attack a wooded hill north of Den Brink in the early afternoon to assist an envisaged attack to the north that never happened; his attack succeeded, but suffered losses because of sustained enemy machine-gun fire. Cain's contingent dug in on the hill, but was targeted by mortars; Lieutenant John Badger, OC 18 Pl, was killed.

During the afternoon the German self-propelled guns started to appear. At Den Brink, Company Sergeant Major Frank Bluff took charge of a 6-pdr anti-tank gun and tried to target the enemy armour, but some of his fellow soldiers got in the way and prevented him from firing. One self-propelled gun noticed the 6-pdr and fired, wounding most of the crew; they were soon taken prisoner. Another retreat was required. Major Buchanan established a position near Oosterbeek Station and Howes reached him in a jeep he had found with a trailer that contained a Vickers MMG. Lieutenant-Colonel William F.K. Thompson, CO 1 Airlanding Light Regiment Royal Artillery, established a road-block further back in Oosterbeek as a staging post to organize the stragglers. Cain reached this position and Thompson told him to site the Vickers and 6-pdr guns where he thought appropriate.

With 375 men still under command, on 20 September 2 S Staffs moved to the Van Hofwegen laundry in Oosterbeek to prepare the defence of the

eastern side of the perimeter. The battalion had the support of 3in mortars, the artillery batteries of 1 Airlanding Light Regiment Royal Artillery nearby, 6-pdr anti-tank guns and 2in mortars that were used to take on tanks. In the new positions, 2 S Staffs took advantage of residential properties to carry out a successful defence against German infantry attacks supported by StuG-Brigade 280. The German infantry would rarely attack without armour support. Tiger tanks of schwere Panzer-Abteilung 506 were also deployed in this sector. PIAT rounds were used effectively against the German armour, but there were hardly any rounds remaining by the time of the withdrawal.



At the museum, German half-tracks and self-propelled guns drove into the grounds to breach the walls, while accompanying infantry infiltrated the houses across the street. As B Coy withdrew, the Germans burst into the museum and captured most of the defenders on the second floor. Other British positions received similar treatment. Here, some of the buildings defended by the platoons of A Coy opposite the museum are visible. A German 2cm anti-aircraft gun squashed by a self-propelled gun can be seen next to the building defended by 7 Pl. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-497-3531A-29 Foto: Jacobsen)



Opposite the museum, the Germans took the two houses occupied by 9 PI and then captured the burning house occupied by 8 PI and Lieutenant Alan E. Barker. Sergeant J. Drew of 8 PI described a German vehicle with a loud-hailer ordering them to surrender (Middlebrook 1995: 205). Drew was in the basement of the house when a brick was thrown in; he was grateful the Germans had not used a grenade. Lance Sergeant A. Kite recounted how the woman who owned the building defended by 7 PI informed the Germans where the British were hiding; the defenders were taken prisoner, forced to take off their helmets and equipment and searched for valuables (Junier, Smulders & Korsloot 2004: 120). Here, 7 PI survivors are being marched off. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-497-3531A-27 Foto: Jacobsen)

Contesting the perimeter

19–23 September 1944

BACKGROUND TO BATTLE

At 0945hrs on 17 September, 1 Border took off, but one glider, loaded with a 6-pdr anti-tank gun, failed to launch and would not be brought on the operation; another three ditched because of thick cloud cover. Glider pilots could not see their towing aircraft. Lieutenant Robert C. Crittenden's 17 Pl from C Coy and 13 Pl from B Coy ditched, as did the glider carrying Lieutenant William P. Stott, 2IC B Coy, with a jeep and two B Coy trailers. 1 Border also landed without the commanding officer, Lieutenant-Colonel Thomas H. Haddon, whose glider force-landed in England because its instruments were not working and it could not maintain the same course as the tug in the cloudy weather; on 18 September Haddon would set off again, but the Dakota tug aircraft was hit over Belgium; Haddon landed 120km from his battalion.

Sunday, 17 September was warm and sunny; at 1300hrs the pathfinders of 9 Squadron, Royal Engineers laid out markers for the gliders 30 minutes prior to their arrival on LZ S. Several gliders landed in the woods. The ground was good, laid to crops, but dusty, and the loose surface was disturbed when the gliders landed. Lieutenant Alan T. Green, OC 20 Pl, stated that his glider was fired at while about to land; bullets went through the floor, but only caused a single casualty (Eastwood, Gray & Green 1994: 104). Elsewhere, 7 Pl's glider slid into a barn on the edge of a field; the occupants sustained no injuries, but the platoon hand cart to be brought out of the glider had to be emptied of the reserve ammunition, pickaxes and rations and then reloaded. One glider with a 6-pdr gun inside had crashed into a tree and was 12m off the ground; the cockpit was smashed and the gun was irretrievable. Another anti-tank gun could not be brought out of a glider because the fuselage was not positioned correctly, but the officer in charge was told to tilt the glider to enable the unloading and the gun was successfully retrieved.

Once landed, 1 Border moved to the south-west corner of LZ Z. B Coy, with two 6-pdr anti-tank guns, two Vickers MMGs and two mortars, was sent

to Renkum; D Coy, with two mortars, headed off to Heelsum; A Coy took up position at the southern end of LZ Z and C Coy moved to the landing zone's eastern side. The positions of HQ Coy and the rest of S Coy were approximately equidistant between the companies. The wireless link to B Coy was not working; the local telephone exchange and Dutch resistance were used to relay messages; and the signals officer would be sent to lay telephone wire to the company. Major Henry S. Cousens, the battalion second-in-command, replaced Haddon and Major Charles F.O. Breese, OC D Coy, went to Bn HQ as the new second-in-command; Captain William K. Hodgson commanded D Coy.



Generalleutnant Hans von Tettau served as a company commander in World War I and stayed on in the German Army, predominantly commanding training units during the interwar years. With the rapid expansion of the German armed forces in the late 1930s, Tettau was given his own regiment and then, in 1940, a division, which went on to participate in the invasion of southern Russia. He was moved to the reserve in 1943, but later that year was appointed to oversee the training of units stationed in the Netherlands. Tettau would command a composite force gathered together to attack the western perimeter at Oosterbeek. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-233-0899-35 Foto: Wetterau, Theodor)

Generalleutnant Hans von Tettau planned to attack on 18 September with the equivalent of six battalions over an 8km front. Moving from Zaltbommel, 6./SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 4 was among the first German elements to arrive as the company had motor transport. 1./SS-Btl *Schulz* stayed at Zaltbommel, but 2., 3. and 4./SS-Btl *Schulz* had moved to Grebbeberg. On 18 September B Coy, 1 Border, at Renkum was missing a platoon that did not land; SS-

Hauptsturmführer Günther Schulz moved into the village in the morning and then headed to Heelsum. The task of clearing the brickworks was given to Korvettenkapitän Theodor Zaubzer's 10. Schiffs-Stamm-Abteilung; elements of that battalion's 4. Kompanie, led by Oberleutnant Engelmann, entered the brickworks, unaware of the presence of B Coy. A Vickers MMG crew in a hay loft over the stables observed them and opened fire at a range of 180m. The sailors moved off the road and into neighbouring buildings. A German sniper targeted the Vickers MMG and hit the tripod, wounding both members of the gun crew. The machine gun was brought down; the hay loft was soon set on fire with tracer. The resulting smoke made a good marker and German mortars targeted the building effectively, creating a fire that spread to other buildings.

B Coy was given permission to withdraw to Heelsum in the early afternoon of 18 September through a message passed via D Coy (the telephone line had broken), but this route was blocked; instead, B Coy personnel retreated through the back door of the brickworks to the gully formed by the river bank. Five jeeps, all damaged by mortar fire, had to be abandoned, as were two 6-pdr anti-tank guns and two mortars; one jeep managed to escape with the wounded on board. The soldiers were told to leave their small packs and take only ammunition and the machine guns. The German sailors entered the abandoned brickworks too late to stop the withdrawal.

The other companies of 1 Border experienced probing attacks from SS-Bataillon *Schulz*, but S Coy's mortars and 75mm guns helped repel the Germans. To the north of Zaubzer's positions, SS-Obersturmführer Richard Kriftner's 2./SS-Btl *Schulz* moved against Green's 20 Pl north of Renkum, supported by mortar and machine-gun fire. Green's sergeant, Stan Sears, was pointing out the Germans in houses on the other side of the valley when he was hit by machine-gun fire. Green threw himself to the ground as the house received further attention that tore splinters from the side of the building. The Germans got close to No. 1 section of 21 Pl without realizing; the section opened fire at 90m, wounding most of the attackers. Lieutenant Edward S. Newport, OC 1 AT Pl, had a 6-pdr anti-tank gun camouflaged nearby when a company of enemy soldiers accompanied by a tank appeared at the edge of a wood. He fired a Bren gun and the 6-pdr fired a single round that persuaded the tank to retire. Newport's party could not halt the advance of SS-Obersturmführer Kessler's 3./SS-Btl *Schulz*. Kessler was an officer in SS-

Regiment *Der Führer* in 1940; he served for three years in the Soviet Union before being wounded and had only recently arrived at the school, on 16 September. Kessler's men fired at gliders on the landing zone and one, full of ammunition, exploded. SS-Bataillon *Schulz* suffered losses during these attacks, including SS-Obersturmführer Heinrich Steingrube, OC 4./SS-Btl *Schulz*, who was wounded.

1 Border's move to Oosterbeek was delayed because the second lift was late, arriving by 1500hrs on 18 September. By this time SS-Bataillon *Eberwein* and Oberstleutnant Adolf Zaiser's Fliegerhorst Bataillon 1 had arrived. Zaiser's unit was not strong enough to attack the landing zone and so Schulz placed two of his companies with the Luftwaffe unit. Those gliders missing on the initial lift arrived, but Haddon's did not. 19 Pl from D Coy brought in five gliders with the battalion reserve of ammunition.

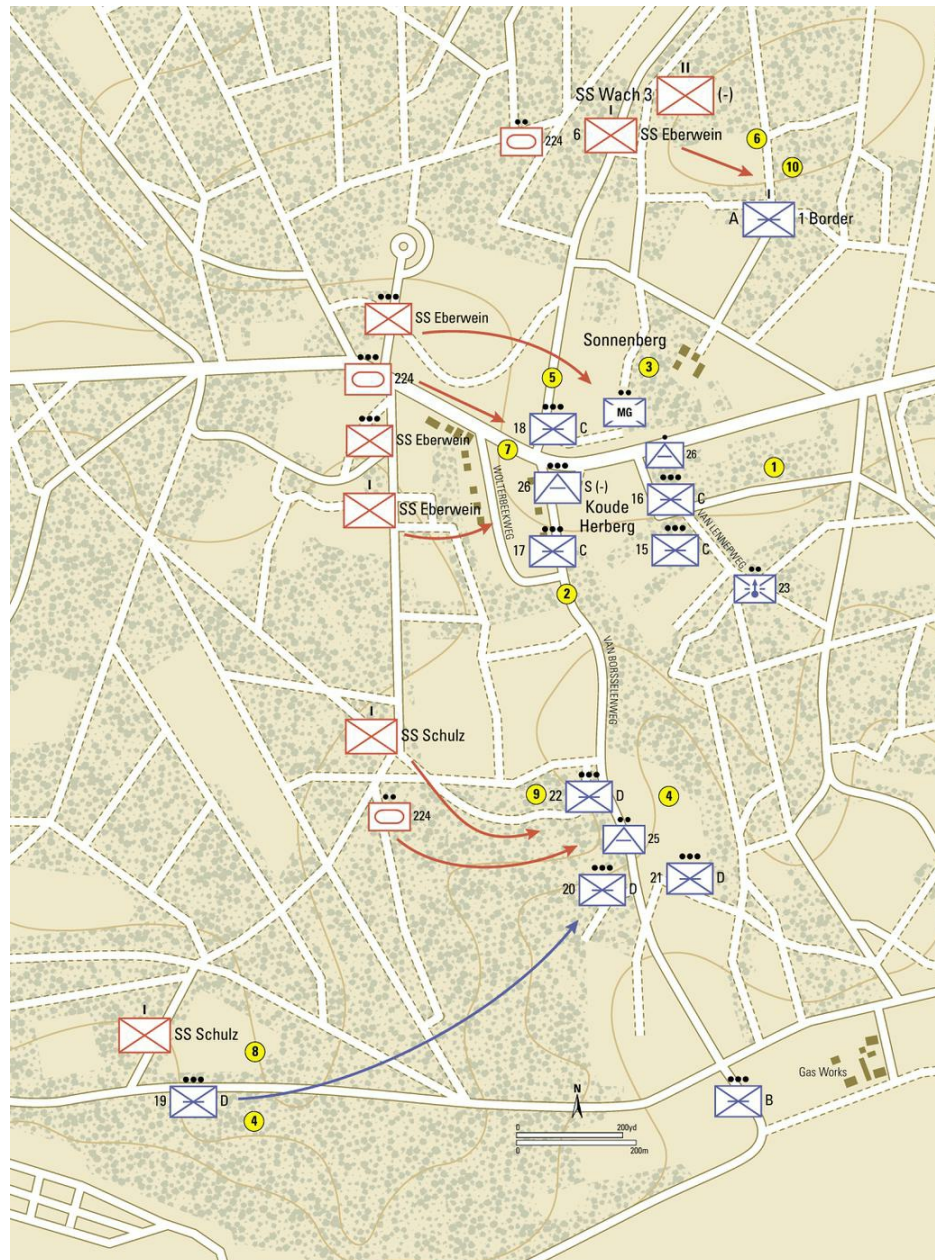
At 1900hrs on 18 September, the companies of 1 Border headed off to their new locations, but the Germans had time to infiltrate through the British positions. SS-Obersturmführer H. Strothmann was wounded and SS-Untersturmführer Wilhelm Bierman took his place as OC 6./SS-Btl *Eberwein*. Two MG 34 machine-gun teams located in a wood ambushed Lieutenant Patrick Baillie's 7 Pl from A Coy. Sergeant W. Kerr fired his Sten submachine gun, but the weapon did not work, so he assaulted and destroyed the German position with two grenades. Even so, Baillie's platoon was held in position with no cover and had to wait until nightfall to make further progress.



Taken soon after the end of the war, this image shows the brickworks at Renkum. During the battle, 10. Schiffs-Stamm-Abteilung, supported by the heavy weapons of SS-Bataillon *Schulz*,

captured the brickworks from B Coy, 1 Border. SS-Standartenführer Michael Lippert described the attack on the brickworks as bitter, resulting in heavy German casualties because of confusion and indecision (Kershaw 2004: 113). The Kriegsmarine personnel were not sure of where they were going and those who advanced bunched together were mown down by the British. (Image courtesy of Cumbria's Museum of Military Life)

Contesting the perimeter, 19–23 September 1944



1 19 September: 1 Border retreats to Van Borsseleweg and establishes positions along the road from the railway line to the Rhine. Bn HQ is in a building on Van Lennepweg; two 3in mortars are positioned in woodland to the south of Bn HQ on the south side of Van Lennepweg.

2 Evening, 19 September: C Coy has 17 PI and 18 PI occupy the Koude Herberg road junction and houses on the Wolterbeekweg and Van Borsseleweg. Two 6-pdr anti-tank guns are deployed in gardens near the road junction.

3 Evening, 19 September: 16 PI is deployed in the gardens on the Utrechtseweg, 180m back from the road junction, with two Vickers MMGs and a section north of the road covering open ground; 15 PI is deployed along Van Lennepweg. A 6-pdr gun is placed on the corner of Van Lennepweg and the Utrechtseweg.

4 Evening, 19 September: By this time D Coy, with two anti-tank guns in support, has established positions on Van Borsseleweg in heavily wooded terrain. 19 PI is deployed in front along a road north-east of Heveadorp.

5 Morning, 20 September: Supported by a PzKpfw B2(f), two platoons of SS-Bataillon *Eberwein* approach 16 PI behind a mortar bombardment, but are driven off.

6 1000hrs, 20 September: Infantry from SS-Bataillon *Eberwein* supported by two tanks attack 10 PI, A Coy; a tank commander is killed by a Bren gunner and his tank retreats. German infantry occupy a large house, but are driven out by 10 PI.

7 1500hrs, 20 September: Two or three PzKpfw B2(f) advance with the support of an infantry company from SS-Bataillon *Eberwein* and momentarily push C Coy off its position at the Koude Herberg road junction. British anti-tank fire destroys two tanks and the German infantry retreat.

8 1600hrs, 20 September: SS-Bataillon *Schulz* attacks 19 PI. A PIAT destroys a supporting armoured vehicle and the German infantry are dispersed by Bren gun fire. Having suffered casualties, 19 PI withdraws during the night and reaches the rest of D Coy.

9 Late morning, 21 September: D Coy is hit by a heavy mortar barrage that precedes an attack by SS-Bataillon *Schulz* supported by two PzKpfw B2(f). A 6-pdr gun destroys a German tank; the German infantry and the surviving tank are deterred by British artillery firing in support.

10 Early afternoon, 23 September: Having sent two platoons to support B Coy, A Coy is below strength. Assisted by engineers

that have occupied positions south towards C Coy, Captain Barry B. Ingram, OC Mortars, helps repel the attack on the A Coy positions by bringing up a mortar that sets fire to buildings occupied by the Germans.

Battlefield environment

On 19 September, 1 Border withdrew to Van Borsselenweg on the western side of the Oosterbeek perimeter. From north to south A Coy, C Coy, D Coy and B Coy were deployed along the road. While C Coy on the Koude Herberg junction had better lines of sight in front of its positions, D Coy with woods close to the road decided to send 19 PI to a position detached from the rest of the company in order to provide warning of German movements. Elements of SS-Bataillon *Schulz* accompanied by tanks were able to outflank this position and could approach close to D Coy without being seen.



Looking north along Van Borsselenweg. D Coy had its positions along the road with woods to the south-west. Further north along Van Borsselenweg, C Coy had its positions in terrain near the Koude Herberg road junction that featured more side roads and buildings. (Image courtesy of Cumbria's Museum of Military Life)



B Coy, 1 Border occupied the dominating Westerbouwing Heights, which overlooked the Driel Ferry, visible here in the background. Although the heights dominated the perimeter and the ferry, neither side prioritized this significant terrain. Roads connected with the ferry on the south bank and could be used by the relieving forces to approach the ferry, but divisional headquarters did not fully appreciate the importance of this site and the British force sent to guard the area was limited. The heights should have formed the base of the Oosterbeek perimeter. (Image courtesy of Cumbria's Museum of Military Life)

INTO COMBAT

1 Border took 5½ hours to cover 4.8km. B Coy was north of the Driel Ferry and C Coy was on the Heelsum road, but A Coy and D Coy were in heavily wooded terrain that offered restricted fields of fire and were moving in groups that could not cover each other. Nevertheless, they were in their positions by 0515hrs on 19 September. Two 17-pdr anti-tank guns from brigade headquarters were nearby. Tuesday, 19 September was relatively quiet for 1 Border. There was shelling, but no major attacks. Making contact with the platoons deployed in the woods was difficult as shrubbery and tall grass hindered visibility.

During the night of 19/20 September, the battalion line was shortened again to prevent the Germans breaking through. A Coy was furthest north; then came C Coy, which had open country in front and woods behind. D Coy was again positioned in heavily wooded terrain to the south, with only 22 Pl having a field of fire, while B Coy was placed near the heights over the Rhine at Westerbouwing. Three platoons of B Coy took position on and near the 27m-high ground overlooking the Driel Ferry; company headquarters and the fourth platoon were on lower ground closer to the southern end of Van Borsselenweg. Although two mortars were given to B Coy to replace those lost at Renkum, the company had no anti-tank guns and would have to rely on PIATs. Two anti-tank guns were in position with D Coy, facing south to the river and west along a track between a wood and open field; 19 Pl was in an isolated position 1km forward of the company headquarters, and making

contact with this platoon in the woods proved difficult. C Coy had 17 Pl and 18 Pl forward occupying the Koude Herberg café and houses on the Wolterbeekweg and on Van Borsselenweg running south towards the river. The two other platoons were 180m further back on Van Lennepweg: 16 Pl, later reinforced by engineers, was deployed in the gardens on the Utrechtseweg; two Vickers MMGs and a section of 16 Pl north of the road covered open ground; and 15 Pl was positioned along Van Lennepweg. Two 3in mortars from the hand-cart mortar platoon were placed in woodland below Bn HQ on the south side of Van Lennepweg. Three 6-pdr anti-tank guns were also in support; two, commanded by Sergeant J. Molloy and Sergeant B. French, were in gardens near the road junction, while the third, commanded by Corporal B. Lever, covered the main road.

At 0600hrs on 20 September the two 6-pdr guns supporting C Coy were shelled, wounding some of the crew. At 1030hrs, two platoons from SS-Bataillon *Eberwein* with the support of a PzKpfw B2(f) approached 16 Pl behind a mortar bombardment, but were driven off. Led by an engineer officer, soldiers from 16 Pl unsuccessfully attempted to destroy the tank. At 1230hrs the Germans attacked again, but were repelled once more. 17 Pl suffered numerous casualties because of the shelling; the men of the platoon were pushed out of their positions, but then retook them. Thatch-roofed houses were set alight with tracer rounds. At 1500hrs, two or three PzKpfw B2(f) advanced with the support of a German infantry company and momentarily pushed C Coy off its position at the Koude Herberg road junction; some British soldiers, shaken by the flame-throwing tanks, headed south to D Coy positions and were brought back by Lieutenant Alan D. Roberts, OC 16 Pl. Then Unteroffizier Jacob's tank on the road heading north from the road junction was hit by a 17-pdr. With these two tanks knocked out, Eberwein retreated as the defenders, led by Major William Neill, OC C Coy, had regained their composure.



SS-Standartenführer Lippert decided to force the Utrechtseweg at the Koude Herberg road junction with tanks. Oberleutnant A. May's Panzer-Abteilung 224, fielding 18 PzKpfw B2(f) tanks, arrived late on 19 September and lost one tank on the way. There were three platoons of either five or six tanks, each equipped with a flamethrower in the hull and a 47mm gun in the turret. Leutnant Siegfried Giesa's 2./PzAbt 224 supported SS-Bataillon *Eberwein*. Here, Giesa's tank is shown knocked out at the road junction. (Bundesarchiv Bild-101I-590-2331-06 Foto: Seeger, Erwin)



Private Sandy Masterton was part of the 6-pdr anti-tank gun crew commanded by Sergeant J. Molloy. Masterton never fired his gun and the gun crew fought as infantry in C Coy. On the morning of 20 September, Masterton was near the 6-pdr gun commanded by Sergeant French near the Koude Herberg road junction when French's gun was hit by a mortar barrage; the crew suffered three casualties. This photograph shows the third 6-pdr gun operating with C Coy, which accounted for a German tank later on 20 September; Lance Corporal Eccles and Private Barr are among the crew. (© IWM BU 1109)

The fight for the Koude Herberg road junction, 20 September



On 20 September, two platoons from C Coy, 1 Border were located near the Koude Herberg road junction at the end of the Utrechtseweg. They had three 6-pdr anti-tank guns in support. Two of the guns were in position near the Koude Herberg restaurant, but they were unable to fire owing to restricted lines of sight and casualties suffered during the German artillery bombardment earlier in the day; the third gun, shown here, was positioned slightly further back in the garden of a house on Van Lennepweg. At 1500hrs, three armoured vehicles advanced towards the road junction supported by a company from SS-Bataillon *Eberwein*. The platoons of C Coy were driven back, but two PzKpfw B2(f) tanks were lost to anti-tank fire from the 17-pdr gun stationed further back and the 6-pdr gun shown here. The

tank belonging to Leutnant Siegfried Giesa, the tank platoon commander, halted by the Koude Herberg café when fired upon by the 6-pdr gun from a distance of about 180m. A Bren gun team stationed in the gardens of the house are firing at the accompanying infantry. With the loss of these tanks the German infantry attack soon broke up.

At 1000hrs that day A Coy was attacked by infantry, probably from SS-Bataillon *Eberwein*, using paths through the woods and supported by an unidentified self-propelled gun and a tank. Armed with a PIAT and occupying a small cottage, the scout section of 10 Pl could hear the German armour. Lieutenant Edmund F. Scrivener, OC 10 Pl, and Sergeant J. Hunter appeared; Hunter was hit by machine-gun fire from the tank. Corporal W. Collings fired his Bren gun at the tank and hit the commander in the turret. The tank then withdrew.

At 1600hrs, D Coy's 19 Pl moved forward to report on German movement; encountering an enemy armoured car supported by infantry, 19 Pl persuaded the Germans to retire courtesy of a PIAT and a Bren gun. Unable to report German movement as the radio was useless, 19 Pl decided to pull out that night, but not all of its personnel would escape. During the day, German forces infiltrated positions of 20 Pl and 22 Pl through a fold in the ground and two jeeps were destroyed by German fire.



C Coy held firm on 20 September, but elements retreated the next day. Armed with a Bren gun, Major William Neill, OC C Coy, led them back to the front line. Shown here (with binoculars) in his foxhole on 20 September, Neill had joined 1 Border on 9 August 1942; he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order on 9 November 1944. (© IWM BU 1102)

At 0530hrs on 21 September, a bombardment of A Coy's positions commenced; C Coy, also targeted, suffered casualties, but the German focused their efforts upon B Coy on the Westerbouwing. At 0900hrs, 3./FSPzAuERgt *Hermann Göring* attacked B Coy's positions. The German unit commander, Oberleutnant Artur Wossowski, had no experience of infantry assaults. A platoon of PzKpfw B2(f) entered the grounds of the restaurant on the Westerbouwing. The four tanks moved down the slope where PIAT gunners destroyed two and disabled a third, but the damage to the B Coy position at the restaurant was already done. The British abandoned the 3in mortars when the tanks approached. Major T.W.W. Armstrong, OC B Coy, called down a barrage on his positions, but the gun fire was hitting friendly elements; another officer successfully used his radio to order a ceasefire. B Coy withdrew to the gas works and from here attempted to counter-attack the higher ground. Armstrong was captured and Lieutenant J.A. Wellbelove, OC 13 Pl, and the company sergeant major were killed. Cousens decided to order Major Dennis R.L. Morrissey to counter-attack with two platoons from his HQ Coy, but the attack made no progress; the

British survivors retreated to a large house called Dennenoord. The base of the perimeter was reduced to 640m, but the defences here would hold.



A mortar team from Lieutenant Michael Holman's mortar platoon fires in support of C Coy. Corporal J. McDowell was the team leader; the others were Private N. Knight and Private R. Tierney. Their mortar position was on the edge of woodland south of Van Lennepweg and below Bn HQ; the other was further back, nearer the road. The mortar is shown firing at close range, hence the angle of the tube, and was not using secondary charges. Requests were made for mortar fire verbally; all platoons had No. 68 radio sets, but they were not working properly. There were ten mortars with the battalion's support company; however, those kept with S Coy had to shoot at grid references because controllers could not observe the fall of shot. Captain Barry B. Ingram, OC Mortars, relayed the grid references to Holman. By 23 September, Holman's mortar platoon was nearly out of ammunition and the soldiers would fight on as infantry. The three mortar crewmen succeeded in crossing the Rhine during the retreat. (© IWM BU 1099)

Oberst Fritz Fullriede commented how the attack here and subsequent attacks on Dennenoord cost 3./FSPzAuERgt *Hermann Göring* 50 per cent of its strength because Oberst Schramm had not permitted the use of heavy weapons in case some of his own men were hit (Kershaw 2004: 236). Fullriede insisted that Schramm be removed from command and this duly happened on 24 September. British snipers hidden in the trees, machine guns that moved their firing position frequently and incompetent German tactics were causing the Germans heavy losses and delaying their progress.

On 21 September, D Coy suffered a heavy mortar barrage that preceded an attack by infantry from SS-Bataillon *Schulz* supported by two PzKpfw B2(f).

Lieutenant Philip S. Holt, OC 21 Pl, was killed in the barrage and his platoon withdrew to form the company reserve. One tank moved down the edge of the wood on the field side of the fence opposite 22 Pl firing short bursts with its turret-mounted machine gun; the other tank moved right across 20 Pl positions along a ride in the wood. Private Parker, armed with a PIAT, ran towards the hedgerow and fired, but the weapon had no effect. The anti-tank gun on the edge of the wood was not able to target the tank and so the crew raced towards the other gun at the rear and manhandled it into a firing position. The tank was 18m away, but obscured by the hedgerow. Corporal T. Langhorn was killed by machine-gun fire and Private F. Hodges was severely wounded while helping to shift the gun into position. Amid mortar and small-arms fire, the tank broke from cover and was destroyed with an APDS round; the gunner did not want to stop firing, and in all six rounds were fired. Lieutenant Green and two others lay in wait for the second tank, but a barrage deterred the vehicle. The German attack petered out.

On 22 September, German attacks on the Oosterbeek perimeter were limited because they were worried about the advance of XXX Corps; however, the relieving ground forces were delayed by the failure to capture Nijmegen Bridge early on in the operation. The American 82d Airborne Division concentrated on defending the approaches to Nijmegen rather than on capturing the town and bridge. A river crossing by paratroopers was delayed until 20 September because boats needed to be brought forward through the mass of traffic in the narrow corridor along which XXX Corps had driven to reach Arnhem. The attack by the paratroopers on the northern end was complemented by the Guards Armoured Division attacking the southern end; however, the advance to Driel to link with the Poles of 1st Independent Parachute Brigade was achieved only on 22 September because the Germans had established a defensive line south of Arnhem, having already recaptured the bridge.

On 22 September the artillery of XXX Corps moved into position to fire in support of the soldiers defending the Oosterbeek perimeter. A battery of 7.2in guns and the 4.5in guns belonging to 64 Medium Regiment Royal Artillery were available, but the fall of shot would have to be corrected by company commanders using three separate radio links, a process that took 45 minutes and which was vulnerable to German interception. The company supporting the shoot would often be targeted by the Germans before fire for effect could be brought down.

Despite the limited German attacks conducted by Tettau on the perimeter on 22 September, the artillery would be needed by 1 Border that day because the battalion ammunition depot was badly hit at 0900hrs. Company Sergeant Major L. Fielding salvaged what he could, but all except two of the battalion's vehicles were destroyed; Regimental Sergeant Major A. Pope was fatally wounded. At 1200hrs, Major Breese and Lieutenant Stott plus Lieutenant Robert H. Coulston's 9 Pl, the rest of HQ Coy and two composite platoons from other units counter-attacked towards the Driel Ferry, but made little progress. Lieutenant Arthur R. Royall's 12 Pl was still occupying a building close to the gas works, while Breese's force took position in other buildings opposite the gas works. The guns of the relieving ground forces provided artillery support. In D Coy's positions, a mortar bomb flew through the trees and hit Green, but did not explode; Private L. Powell threw the bomb out of their trench. At 1600hrs, Captain Hodgson reported that D Coy was down to two officers and 35 others. In the C Coy area, Lieutenant Roberts led a patrol that brought in two MG 34 machine guns and Lance Corporal Charles Gavaghan laid a telephone line to Bn HQ to facilitate artillery support.

On 23 September, Captain Barry B. Ingram, OC Mortars, reinforced what remained of A Coy in the northern part of the perimeter. Major Thomas E. Montgomery, OC A Coy, had already been wounded and captured. Captain Baldwin Wilson, 2IC A Coy, appeared and took Ingram to the company headquarters in a building near a fir plantation. Wilson had 70 men, one Vickers MMG, two Bren guns, one PIAT and three PIAT bombs. The headquarters entrance was being sniped at. The Germans (elements of SS-Bataillon *Eberwein* supported by SS-Wach-Bataillon 3) were occupying two or three cottages beyond the trees. After ambushing a German attack from these cottages, 1 Border personnel took the MG 34s that the Waffen-SS soldiers were carrying. Ingram fetched a mortar from Bn HQ and had Sergeant Rogers bring the weapon with three smoke and nine high-explosive rounds. They hit the thatch-roofed cottages, setting them on fire. The Germans made a hurried retreat under machine-gun fire from the Vickers MMG. Later in the day, Fielding took a PIAT to target a tank that was being repaired close by; the tank crew took fright and abandoned their vehicle. Cousens wanted Ingram to pull back the A Coy positions, but Ingram refused as this would mean abandoning the battalion's wounded, housed nearby. Elsewhere, both C Coy and D Coy were holding off repeated German attacks.

That night, Neill led a counter-attack that threw out a German patrol that had infiltrated his company's positions.



A Bren gun manned by C Coy's Private L. Jury and Private Malcolm is shown in a garden on the corner of Van Lennepweg and the Utrechtseweg where a 6-pdr anti-tank gun was located. The three sergeants of the Army Film and Photographic Unit were based here. (© IWM BU 1108)



D Coy had its headquarters in this building on Van Borselenweg; the wounded were attended to in the cellar and in a neighbouring room lay a mortar round that had not exploded. 22 PI was positioned in front of the building on the other side of Van Borselenweg looking down a road to a farm with a field to the north and woods to the south; 20 PI was in woods to the south-west and 21 PI was deployed to the south in front of the gatekeeper's cottage. (Image courtesy of Cumbria's Museum of Military Life)

On 24 September the battalion ammunition reserve was down to 2,500 rounds of .303. By this stage in the battle, 50 per cent of C Coy's weapons had been captured from the Germans. A tank was reported destroyed by Breese's A Coy group, but elsewhere the front was quiet. D Coy was isolated and down to 19 soldiers, including Green and Hodges. Oelkers had taken over from Schulz and continued to advance; fire from artillery south of the river was effectively brought down on soldiers from the SS NCO school who were opposite C Coy's positions. That night, a river crossing by Haddon accompanying 4th Battalion, The Dorset Regiment failed. On 25 September, 1 Border was told to prepare for a withdrawal across the river that night; the 70 wounded would be left behind. D Coy had not had contact with the battalion for 48 hours, but a messenger from the company reached Bn HQ and was told to return with withdrawal orders.

Analysis

Operation *Market Garden* was an overly ambitious operation that suffered from poor planning. 1st Airborne Division wanted to see action before the end of the war, but intelligence that reported the presence of Panzer divisions – albeit the battered, exhausted SS Panzer divisions that had only a handful of tanks – was not properly considered in the Allied planning. Despite identifying these units, air force commanders would not concede that their choice of landing zones was faulty. The failure to establish strong defensive positions in Arnhem was partly the result of not landing closer to the objective. The distance of the landing zones from Arnhem also ruined any hope of capturing and holding the bridge to assist ground forces in their assault over the Rhine. The capture of Arnhem and exploitation north would have opened the Dutch ports and put the Allies in a position to attack northern Germany in the spring of 1945 instead of having to go through the Siegfried Line. The opportunity to establish a bridgehead to make use of the Driel Ferry near Oosterbeek was also lost when B Coy, 1 Border was thrown off the heights overlooking the site; this was an insufficient force to defend such an important feature.

The airborne divisions were a strategic asset that if used correctly could have a decisive effect. The Germans had long realized the potential of airborne forces. On 1 October 1944, General der Infanterie Hans Krebs, Heeresgruppe B's chief of staff, wrote a report on Operation *Market Garden* that criticized the Allies for not landing the entire 1st Airborne Division in one day; he thought another division should have landed near the landing area (Duxford 2/10/17 Item 2: 1). Also, Krebs was surprised that German movements were completely unhampered by Allied air power. He thought that the next airborne landing would learn from these mistakes by reinforcing decisively both in respect of time and place.

Krebs pointed out faults with the operation. Ground forces needed to make contact within three days, but were frequently delayed. He mistakenly thought British intelligence had failed to spot the presence of the SS Panzer divisions near the landing area. He thought the Allies' advantage of surprise was lost because of the time taken to move off the landing areas. Krebs' report stated the need for emergency mobile units and pursuit detachments to

be ready to respond to future landings (Duxford 2/10/17 Item 2: 2). The mobile units needed to be composed of physically fit men led by experienced officers and NCOs. Pursuit detachments needed to occupy important sectors and strengthen the defences of specially threatened objectives. Every local command must have at least one pursuit detachment to comprise a platoon of 30 men with machine guns, automatic weapons and hand grenades. The mobile and pursuit units should be motorized to ensure rapidity of response. Motor transport should be used to tow heavy weapons and wagons could be fitted with 2cm anti-aircraft guns to make them mobile ground-firing weapons. Armament supply depots with heavy weapons should be established as some units were short of these in their complement; they could then be issued when needed. Units should be camped outside cities or in the suburbs in order that they could better respond to airborne landings. Old tanks or armoured cars could be assigned to mobile units. The use of *Panzerfäuste* in street fighting was recommended. The command of units fighting airborne landings should be given to the local staff. Leaders should go to advanced positions and make thorough reconnaissance of the landings. Immediate use of assault guns or tanks was recommended. 'Continuous, ceaseless, planned attacks in order to destroy and surround the enemy' (Duxford 2/10/17 Item 2: 3) were to be carried out. All weapons 'should be thrown in immediately' and only energetic, able officers were to be used; 'Rank and position should not be taken into account. Units with weak leadership should be given experienced leaders or be divided' (Duxford 2/10/17 Item 2: 3). Defence exercises against landings were to take place every month. The Germans had implemented many of these recommendations during the battle and they constituted advice to other formations.



This photograph shows where 15 PI and 16 PI, both of C Coy, 1 Border, occupied positions on Van Lennepweg, south of the Utrechtseweg. On 20 September, elements of SS-Bataillon *Eberwein* moved against C Coy. At the road junction, 18 PI was hit badly by machine-gun and mortar fire. The fighting was conducted at close range – on average at 45m – and this made it difficult to exploit a successful attack. (© IWM BU 1103)



During the battle, 1 Border had its Bn HQ in this building on Van Lennepweg. On 23 September, Captain Ingram at Bn HQ heard a report from an A Coy signaller that a tank was only 27m from his position. The signaller asked what to do as there were no officers present. Ingram found Sergeant Burton with a section at Bn HQ and ordered them to follow him. Ingram met some Royal Engineers to the south and witnessed the soldiers of A Coy throwing grenades at German tanks advancing on their positions. (Image courtesy of Cumbria's Museum of Military Life)

SS-Sturmabführer Krafft gave a better assessment of his airborne opponents from a tactical viewpoint. He described how British defensive positions were 1.5–1.8m deep and less than 1m² in area, with a 10cm log parapet on top to rest a weapon (War Diary SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16: 25). The positions were usually in woods and difficult to observe. Allied snipers were used prolifically and caused a large number of casualties to his unit. According to Krafft, the enemy was very skilled in house-to-house fighting; enemy commanders cleverly exploited the Germans' weakest points to gain time (War Diary SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16: 25). Krafft was struck by the strength of the opposition put up by the British and noted their ability to unload from their gliders and go into action within a few minutes. It was necessary for the Germans to attack the enemy immediately in order to disrupt and delay his preparations for battle rather than to destroy him; this would secure time for further German counter-measures. Krafft ruminated on what he could have done if his whole battalion had been with him.

Despite Krafft lauding his adversary, 2 S Staffs should have reached Arnhem quicker than it did. The men of the battalion had no idea of what awaited them; the confused situation made them reluctant and did not encourage rapidity or a sense of urgency. The initial advance of the battalion into Arnhem took eight hours and a decision to halt was made at the outskirts; by contrast, the two companies that started at 1730hrs took only three hours to reach Oosterbeek. By 0000hrs on 18 September the battalion would be united and a decision to attack then would have given them the benefit of darkness, but there was no senior commander there to make the decision and commencing the attack at 0430hrs meant the British benefited from only 50 minutes of darkness before the sun began to rise.

Medlycott questions the ability of 2 S Staffs to fight in an urban environment (Medlycott 2014). The battalion's training did not envisage such a scenario. In February 1942 a Tactical Exercise Without Troops carried out by officers of 2 S Staffs envisaged a rural setting around Cherbourg with farms, small villages, woods and cultivated fields. The frontage given to a battalion attack was 320–550m. Subsequent exercises occurred in similar settings and only once were companies given experience of training in a city, but specifically a heavily bombed area. The battalion's experience of combat in Sicily in 1943 was in villages and when fighting in Italy, 2 S Staffs occupied towns, but faced little opposition. In September 1944, 2 S Staffs was required to fight in an urban area where long, wide boulevards provided

uninterrupted lines of sight for German machine guns, where tall buildings provided hiding places for snipers, and where numerous road intersections provided the enemy with opportunities to interdict a rapid advance into Arnhem.

Yet the command confusion that hampered the British attack and the German superiority in terms of automatic firepower on both flanks of the Allied advance are conceivably more important factors to explain why the attack failed. By the time of the German counter-attack on 19 September, the personnel of 2 S Staffs were in a salient and were being fired at from three sides, but did occupy solid buildings. The timely arrival of StuG-Brigade 280 during the morning of 19 September gave Kampfgruppe *Krafft* the advantage; the airborne troops' training had not prioritized defensive measures against armoured vehicles and the employment of the PIATs could be described as over-ambitious because they were not saved until absolutely needed. There is some debate about the utility of the side-skirts of the self-propelled guns and whether this enabled them to survive hits to the side. The HEAT round would be detonated early by the armour, but the PIAT could still penetrate a self-propelled gun's side armour. This suggests that many PIATs were in fact fired from long range and did not hit.



Following their attacks on 19 September, the surviving self-propelled guns of StuG-Brigade 280 were split, with one platoon each supporting Kampfgruppe *Allwörden*, Kampfgruppe *Harder* and Kampfgruppe *Spindler*. SS-Rottenführer Wolfgang Dombrowski was not impressed by the Heer crews. One self-propelled gun was attached to his section; when hit, it reversed and the crew got out despite the vehicle having sustained only superficial damage. The commander, an NCO, was disgusted that the rest of his crew fled. Here, a StuG III is shown in Oosterbeek. (Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-497-3529-28 Foto: Jacobsen)

There is no argument about the glider-infantry battalions' defensive abilities in the Oosterbeek perimeter. With inspired leadership, the soldiers' determination to stand and fight against a more heavily equipped adversary was laudable; the glider troops' employment of the heavy weapons that were in their establishment was effective and their use of aggressive night patrolling often deterred the Germans. Strung out across a long front, 1 Border, in particular, held off repeated attacks over an extended period. The performance of the SS battalions thrown against them was variable and suffered from poor co-ordination with neighbouring units; but the Germans' ability to redeploy through the battle space and modify their structure to achieve their objectives would ensure that they would wear down their opponent. Lessons could be learned during the battle, but for the British, lacking reinforcement or resupply, they were not.

Aftermath

The airlanding battalions had mixed fortunes during the withdrawal on the night of 25/26 September. 2 S Staffs' retreat went smoothly. Six officer and 133 other ranks reached safety; even so, the battalion had losses of 39 officers and 587 other ranks during the battle. For 7 KOSB, the approach to the Rhine was hazardous; the battalion was furthest from the river. Some of its personnel waited in vain to be told when to leave and were mistakenly overlooked. German shell-fire split the column, with some troops going the wrong way. There were about 20 soldiers with Captain James S. Dundas, 2IC B Coy, and Lieutenant Carter; they were targeted by a German barrage, and only six were not hit. They made the wounded comfortable and then entered a wood where a company of Germans were waiting. Dundas did not survive; Carter was taken prisoner. Payton-Reid was successful in reaching the river and safety with three other officers and 70 other ranks. In all, 104 soldiers from the battalion were killed and 582 taken prisoner (including 165 that were wounded). Some others evaded capture and reached safety with the help of the Dutch resistance.

1 Border also suffered severe losses during the retreat to the Rhine. A Coy had started that evening with 42 soldiers and 28 wounded; the wounded were left behind, but within 30 minutes only 22 of the 42 remained. Captain Hodgson was killed and D Coy did not get out. C Coy was the rearguard, but many of these men did not get across the river; they were captured during the morning of 26 September. Captain Ingram had found a house to sleep in and put on civilian clothes to evade capture, but was noticed and seized.

The losses to the German forces were high. SS-Hauptsturmführer Möller's SS-Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 9 lost 50 per cent of its other ranks. SS-Obersturmführer Engel, OC 3./SS-PzPiBtl 9, was mortally wounded by an anti-tank round that hit his armoured personnel carrier. Following its encounter with 2 S Staffs, Möller's unit fought against 10 Para at the eastern end of the Utrechtseweg. SS-Panzer-Pionier-Bataillon 9 would make no further progress during the battle. Möller was promoted *SS-Sturmbannführer* and awarded the German Cross in Gold. His unit went on to participate in the Ardennes Offensive in December 1944 and he survived the war.



This photograph shows survivors from 1 Border prior to their flight back to Britain. Nine officers and 241 other ranks out of 41 officers and 754 other ranks reported in on the south side of the Rhine. The lessons learned by the Allies during Operation *Market Garden* would be implemented in time for Operation *Varsity* in March 1945, carried out by three airborne divisions on objectives north-east of the Rhine. The Allied airborne forces were landed in a single day – 24 March – at locations that were closer to the front line than in Operation *Market Garden*. Furthermore, the ground attack was already making headway: artillery observers who landed with the airborne divisions could quickly bring down artillery fire to support them. The Germans were preoccupied with the airborne landings and their attention was diverted from the ground attack, which quickly seized bridgeheads over the Rhine at various points. The use of 6th Airlanding Brigade in this assault was debated, as the gliders that carried the brigade in were very vulnerable to anti-aircraft fire. The official historian of the British airborne, Lieutenant-Colonel Terence B.H. Otway, concluded that parachute forces should capture landing zones that gliders were going to use to prevent such losses from occurring. At Nijmegen in September 1944, the 82d Airborne Division had utilized the 325th Glider Infantry Regiment in this way, the regiment arriving later than the paratroopers (the unit was supposed to arrive on 19 September, but bad weather delayed it until 23 September). The British were not able to implement this in the future; *Varsity* would be the last time that British gliders would land soldiers behind enemy lines. (Image courtesy of Cumbria's Museum of Military Life)

On 22 September, SS-Sturmbannführer Krafft was assigned 500 Kriegsmarine personnel and ordered to defend the sector south of the river and east of Driel. Krafft's heavy weapons provided support to other formations and on 24 September a company was sent to support others in Oosterbeek. Krafft stated that because the soldiers were not experienced in house-to-house fighting, little was achieved (War Diary SS-PzGrenAuEBtl 16: 17). On 27 September, Krafft reorganized his battle group into two small battalions commanded by SS-Hauptsturmführer Köhnken and SS-Obersturmführer Kauer.

SS-Unterführerschule *Arnheim* continued to be committed to battle. After the surrender of 1st Airborne Division, Generalleutnant Tettau ordered SS-Obersturmführer Oelkers with 10. Schiffs-Stamm-Abteilung in support to establish a bridgehead across the Rhine on 1 October. Believing this to be useless, Oelkers tried to appeal to SS-Obergruppenführer Demelhuber, but his message did not get through in time. Generalfeldmarschall Model had wanted the school to be withdrawn from the front line, but his order arrived too late; Oelkers had already crossed the Rhine successfully. Holding the lodgement proved costly; but although Tettau refused Oelkers' request to withdraw, the German high command decided to have Oelkers' contingent pull out and on 10 October they managed to escape back across the river. Oelkers withdrew his battalion to Utrecht, where Tettau decorated 76 NCOs with the Iron Cross 2nd Class and 12 with the Iron Cross 1st Class; there was one recipient of the German Cross in Gold. Oelkers reported that his battalion had suffered 100 dead since the start of the battle. 10. Schiffs-Stamm-Abteilung had suffered heavily, too, with 27 killed and 129 wounded. Although SS-Bataillon *Eberwein* was not as heavily engaged after the Oosterbeek battle, its losses were high, with 6./SS-Btl *Eberwein* alone reporting 95 casualties. All students of the school were promoted SS-*Unterscharführer*.



A StuG III with infantry closely following alongside moves past the municipal museum. The remotely operated machine gun that should be atop the vehicle is missing. Camouflage paint

in three tones was applied and the vehicle's exterior was covered with liberal quantities of *Zimmerit* anti-magnetic paste. The vehicle was also covered in branches and foliage to enhance the camouflage and aid concealment. Oberwachtmeister der Reserve Josef Mathes was killed on 19 September, probably by small-arms fire while leading 3./StuGBrig 280. It is not known whether he was on the Utrechtseweg or the lower road at the time of his death. In the period 20–24 September, StuG-Brigade 280 would lose two self-propelled guns destroyed, one by a 6-pdr shell fired by Lance Sergeant John D. Baskeyfield of 2 S Staffs. Baskeyfield was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross for his actions during the battle.
(Bundesarchiv Bild 101I-497-3531-04 Foto: Jacobsen)

SS-Panzer Grenadier-Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16 had a casualty rate of 65 per cent, including 120 killed or missing; 16 soldiers were awarded the Iron Cross 1st Class and 90 the Iron Cross 2nd Class. Krafft was promoted *SS-Obersturmbannführer* and made the commander of SS-Freiwilligen-Grenadier Regiment 83 in 34. SS-Freiwilligen-Grenadier-Division *Landstorm Nederland*, a formation based on three battalions of SS-Grenadier-Regiment *Landstorm Nederland*, originally formed in 1943 with Dutch volunteers for defensive duties only. From 22 September, one battalion of the regiment had fought with Krafft south of the Rhine.

Krafft himself was nominated for the German Cross in Gold for his efforts in September 1944, but there was an error in the paperwork. Three events needed to be cited to justify the award. Krafft told SS-Obersturmbannführer Harzer of the battle near Smolensk in the summer of 1941 and this was mentioned in Harzer's recommendation. The SS high command refused the claim, however, because they said this battle had already been cited to justify the award of the Iron Cross. Krafft was told of the ruling in February 1945. Official records show that SS-Oberführer Wagner was not correct to state that Krafft's Iron Cross was given for this battle, but Wagner's letter saying this was on Krafft's file and this is why the claim was refused.

Following Operation *Market Garden*, SS-Standartenführer Lippert was also appointed a regimental commander in 34. SS-Freiwilligen-Grenadier-Division *Landstorm Nederland*; SS-Wach-Bataillon 3 was dissolved and incorporated in the division. SS-Unterführerschule *Arnheim* was disbanded in October 1944, with the instructors going to other schools and the students returned to unit.

UNIT ORGANIZATIONS

British

The airlanding battalion's headquarters company included signal, administration, pioneer, and transport platoons. There were four infantry companies, each with three platoons. An infantry platoon had a headquarters element of five with a PIAT and a 2in mortar, and two sections each with eight soldiers with a Bren gun, Sten guns and rifles; a third scout section had five men.

The battalion's MMG group had two platoons, each with two sections. The section had a Vickers MMG with five soldiers and a trailer. There was a transport section of two jeeps and two trailers, and five motorcycles. The mortar group had two platoons, each with six mortars; one group had two jeeps and the other had hand carts. The anti-tank group had two platoons, each with four 6-pdr guns. Each gun had a towing jeep and a jeep that carried ammunition.

German

The Waffen-SS battalions engaged during Operation *Market Garden* had varied establishments, but common to them was the basic company organization. The company had a *schwere* (heavy) platoon and three infantry platoons, each with three *Gruppen* (sections). Each Gruppe probably fielded a three-man MG 34 team plus nine soldiers armed with rifles and submachine guns.

The *schwere* platoon had four MG 34s with tripod. Mortar support was provided by each battalion's Granatwerfer 34-equipped *schwere* company as required. SS-Panzer Grenadier Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon 16's *schwere* company also had three 3.7cm anti-tank guns and two 2cm anti-aircraft guns.

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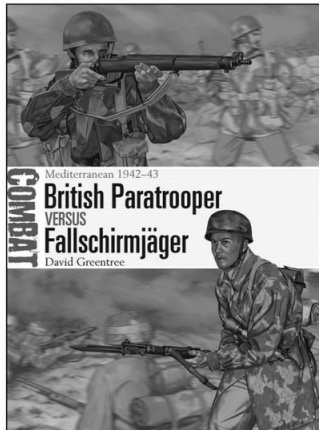
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David Greentree graduated in History at York before completing an MA in War Studies at King's College London and qualifying as a lecturer in Further Education. In 1995 he accepted a commission in the Royal Air Force and has served in a variety of locations, including Afghanistan and Oman.

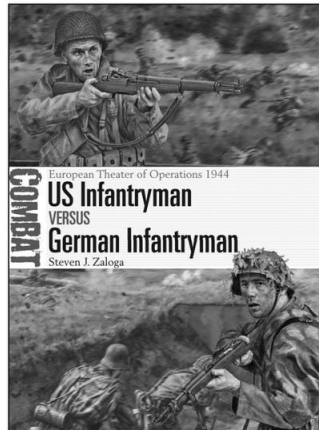
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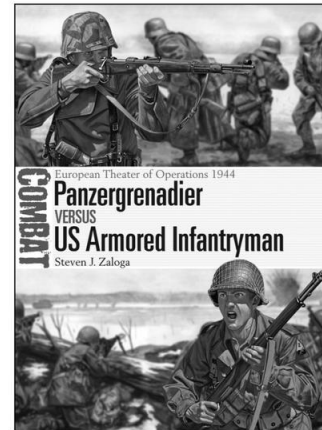
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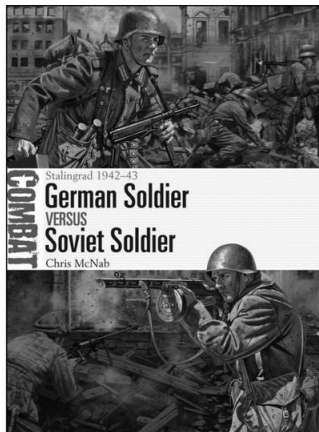
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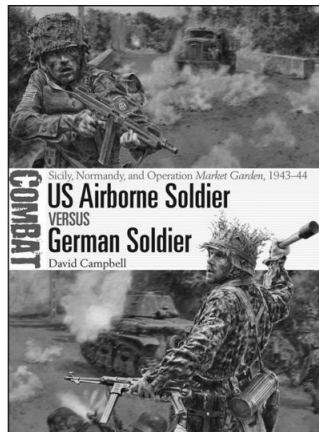
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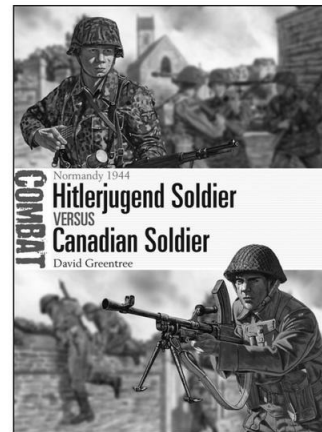
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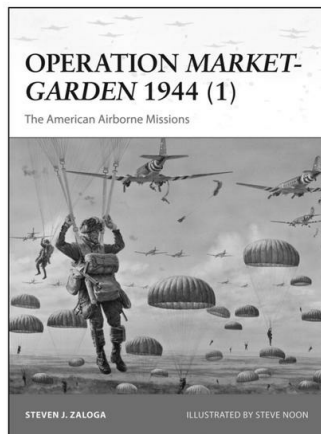


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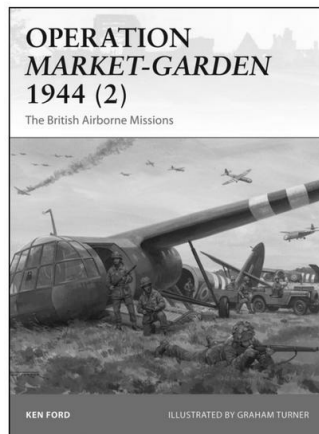


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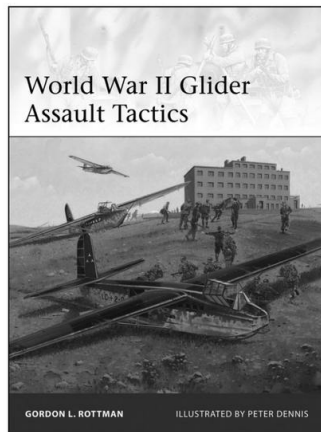
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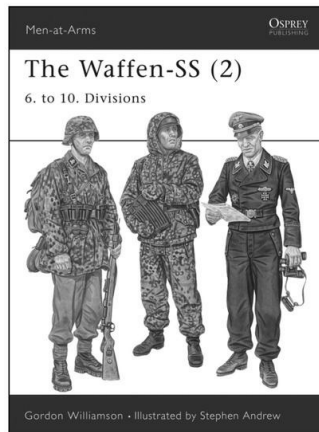
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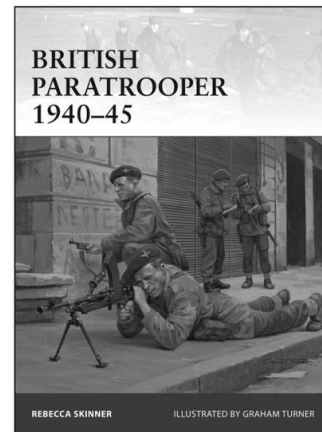
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Editor's note

German ranks and unit designations are given in German. Sub-units such as battalions and companies have abbreviated designations; these are defined below, along with other abbreviations used in the text.

2IC	second-in-command
<i>Abteilung</i>	military unit between battalion and company in size
AT	anti-tank
AuEBtl	<i>Ausbildungs- und Ersatz-Bataillon</i> : training and replacement battalion
<i>Aufklärungs</i>	reconnaissance
Bn HQ	battalion headquarters
CO	commanding officer
Coy	company
FlaK	<i>Flugzeugabwehrkanone</i> : anti-aircraft gun
<i>Freiwilligen</i>	volunteer/voluntary
GOC	general officer commanding
<i>Kampfgruppe</i>	battle group
<i>Kampfgruppenverband</i>	ad hoc combined-arms formation
LZ	landing zone
MMG	medium machine gun
NCO	non-commissioned officer
OC	officer commanding
<i>Panzergrenadier</i>	mechanized/motorized infantry
<i>Panzerjäger</i>	'tank-hunters': anti-tank branch of service

Pl	platoon
<i>Schiffs-Stamm-Abteilung</i>	naval manning battalion
<i>Sicherungs-Regiment</i>	security regiment
StuGBrig	<i>Sturmgeschütz-Brigade</i> : assault-gun brigade

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